

KOMOTION

GEORGE CLINTON

INTERVIEW!

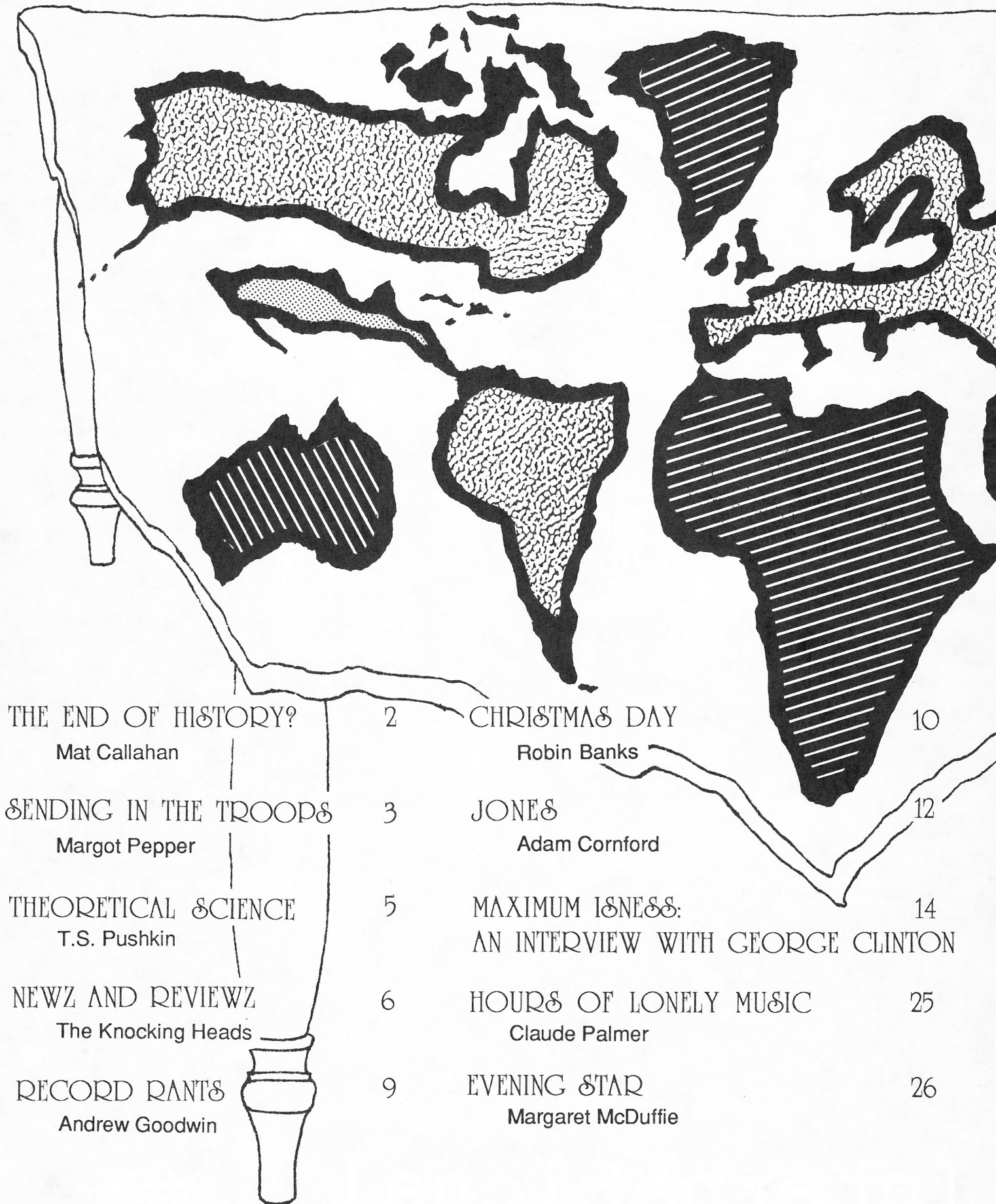


ON THE THRESHOLD OF A DREAM

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International

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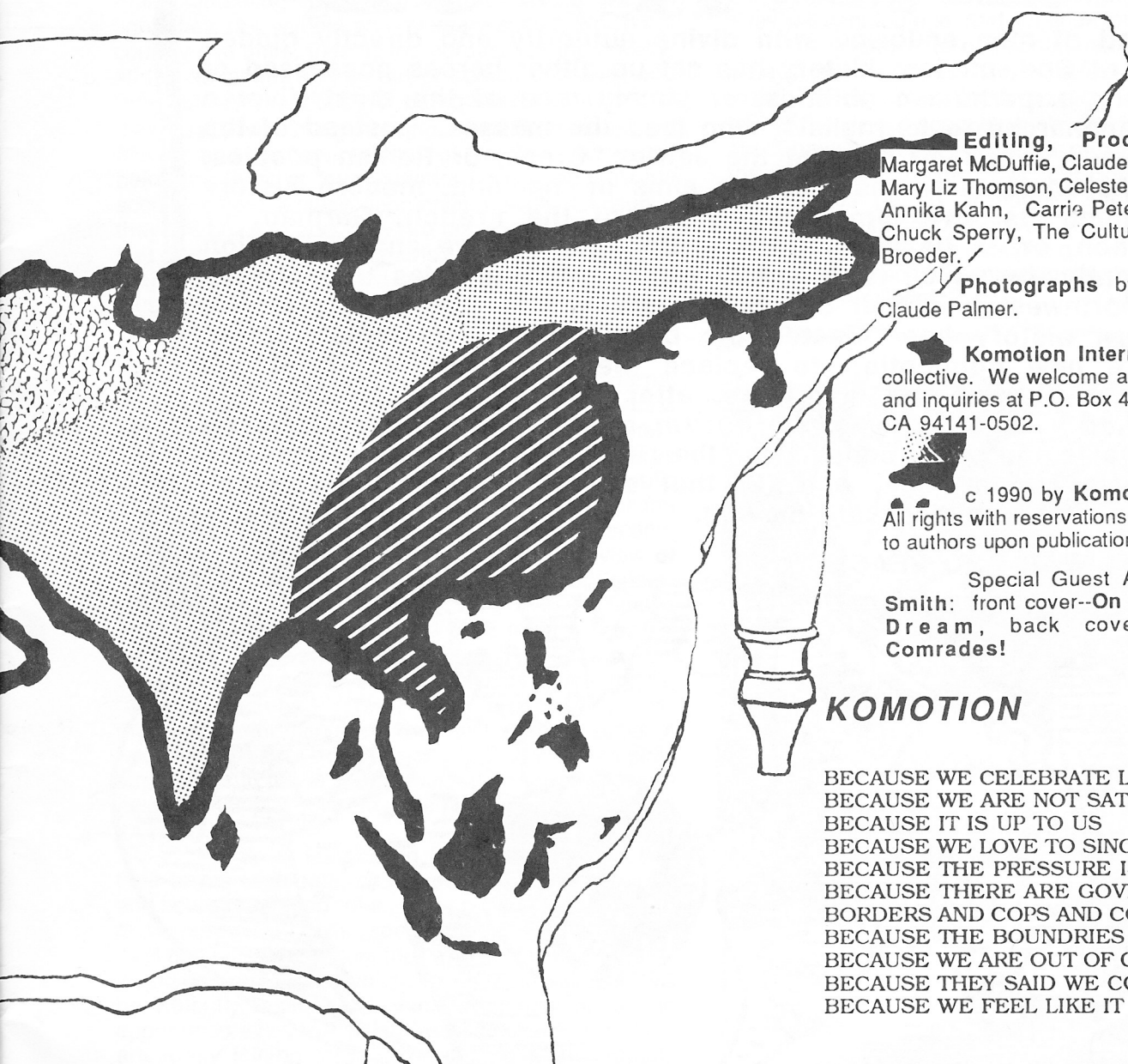
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Komotion International is an artist's
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Smith**: front cover--**On The Threshold of a
Dream**, back cover--**Best Fishes,
Comrades!**

KOMOTION

BECAUSE WE CELEBRATE LIFE AND BATTLE
BECAUSE WE ARE NOT SATISFIED
BECAUSE IT IS UP TO US
BECAUSE WE LOVE TO SING AND DANCE
BECAUSE THE PRESSURE IS UPON US
BECAUSE THERE ARE GOVERNMENTS AND
BORDERS AND COPS AND COURTS
BECAUSE THE BOUNDRIES MUST BE BROKEN
BECAUSE WE ARE OUT OF CONTROL
BECAUSE THEY SAID WE COULDN'T DO IT
BECAUSE WE FEEL LIKE IT

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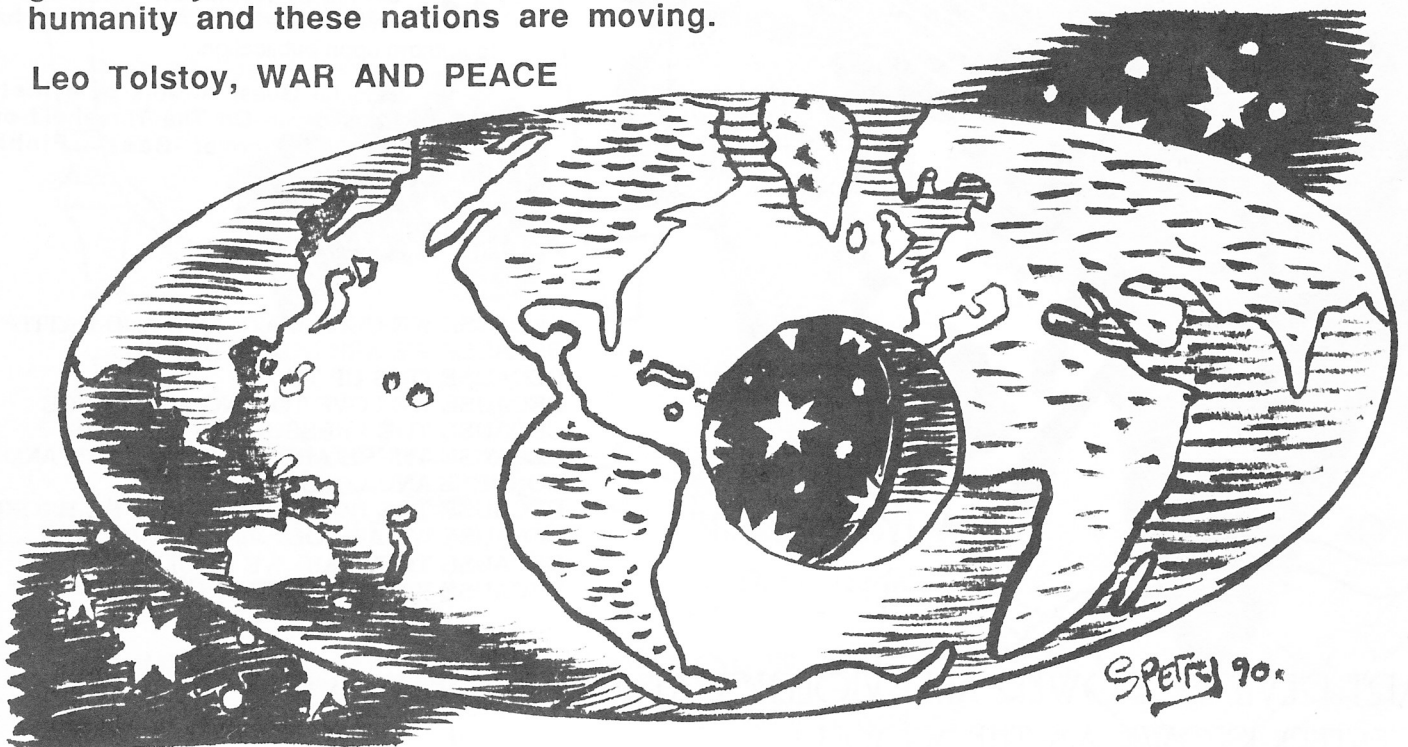
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THE END of HISTORY

Instead of men endowed with divine authority and directly guided by the will of God, modern history has set up either heroes possessed of extraordinary, superhuman abilities, or simply men of the most diverse sort, from monarchs to journalists, who lead the masses. Instead of the former divinely appointed aims of the Jewish, Greek, or Roman peoples, which to the ancients represented the aims of mankind, modern history has postulated its own aims--the welfare of the French, German, or English nation, or, in its highest abstraction, the welfare and civilization of all humanity, by which is generally meant those peoples that occupy the small northwestern corner of a large continent.

Modern history has rejected the beliefs of the ancients without providing a new conception to replace them; and the logic of the situation has obliged the historians, after ostensibly repudiating the divine authority of kings and the *fatum* of the ancients, to come by another path to the same conclusion: the recognition (1) that nations are guided by individual men, and (2) that a goal exists toward which humanity and these nations are moving.

Leo Tolstoy, WAR AND PEACE



Changes of such magnitude have taken place in this century that it is possible to seriously consider the "end of history" as the president's advisors and numerous journalists have put it. We are witnesses to a collapsing framework of time both in physical distance between places and the chronological distances between monumental events. Humanity rode into this century on horseback and rides out on a rocket. While the previous one was marked by war and revolution in Europe, this one has seen the globe engulfed. World War I, Russian Revolution, Fascism, World War II, Chinese Revolution, the Sixties and now.....the demise of Communism.

One part gloating, one part wishful thinking, one part propagandizing and one part plotting, the drink being mixed for popular consumption is intoxicating, indeed. Communism, as practiced in this

world, has failed. But not because there aren't enough douche bags at the pharmacy in Leningrad. Communism failed because it did not revolutionize social relations. In fact, it protected privilege, fostered corruption, engendered apathy and relied on nationalism and force to maintain power--no different than any previous social structures--no different than the good ol' USA! Indeed, the good ol' USA is the mirror opposite but headed in the same direction: producing less and less, consuming more and more until, bloated and drooling it is picked apart by vultures and rodents. Rome fell. But not in one great battle. Its slow, lurching disintegration took over 400 years. Even with the compressed timescales of this era there is still a bit of lurching left in this empire. The difference between the US and the USSR is that here the masses have more toys to keep them distracted.

What the pundits are discussing, though, is really something else. Without an external enemy to fight, they say, without an adversary against which the country can unite, then all the purpose, all the nobility, all the adventure will go out of human endeavor and "our victory," the victory of bourgeoisie liberalism and democracy will bring nothing more than boredom, frivolity and caprice. Instead of freedom and peace being the fruits of "our" superior way of life we'll get social entropy; a stasis approaching death. Of course, they are quick to add, they are not doomsayers. Only that in the absence of the kinds of conflicts that have propelled history forward to this point, new means must be devised to sustain the structure atop which they sit. Their mouthpieces wax eloquent about human nature and the human spirit. They recite the litany of woes besetting us even without external enemies and they urge us all to marvel at their great wisdom that has led us to this epoch-making juncture.

What they are doing with this is, at least, three things: First, they are limiting the terms of public debate. Our choices are war and destruction or the endless expansion of the consumer society. Second, they are attempting to rejuvenate their own view of history, the end of which they have no intentions of presiding over. Particularly now, when in scientific and artistic communities the world over most of what is central to that view is losing its grip in spite of the absence of a Russia or China to serve as an alternative, "model" society. Third, they are testing new mechanisms for manufacturing fear on a mass scale. If we're not afraid of the Russians anymore (as all polls say people in the West are not) then some creature must take its place, not to unite humanity but to control it.

What I'm suggesting is that we look beyond their terms of debate, challenge their view of history and not fear the "end" of it. If it is possible that the kind of sweeping changes society needs to reinvigorate itself can be made without the catalyst of world war, that would be great. But revolutionizing social relations will be violently resisted. In fact, what may becoming apparent to everyone is that Russia, the US and China are really joining forces to hang on to the rapidly fracturing world order. They don't want a world war because they know all too well that it will lead to revolution as it has the last two times. Meanwhile, they cripple themselves with vast military expenditures and their competitors in Europe, Japan and even the underdeveloped countries "invade" economically and thrive in a "peaceful" world!

Furthermore, resistance to the status quo by the many who suffer it continues undaunted by betrayal and confusion regardless of what "ism" attaches itself as "the champion of the cause." What leaders the world over seem incapable of grasping is that human society cannot be "engineered." People can be manipulated, duped, coerced, bribed and enslaved. We will kill and be killed. But for some mysterious reason humans spontaneously disobey, explore, experiment and just trip out with the consequent outbreaks of rebellion and revolution that result. Conversely, the amazing adaptability of our species is partly caused by and in turn causes, the spontaneous reorganization of communities and social

groups in order to survive and to flourish. These universal traits existed long before the modern state. They will contribute to, and continue long after, its end.

Arrogance is not confidence. And there is always greater confidence in having nothing to lose than in having something to protect. Power struggles and all the vicious scratching, clawing brutality they are about have been a characteristic of human affairs from the dawn of civilization. The Four Horsemen still ride. Should this period of human evolution be truly approaching its conclusion, we have every reason to rejoice. Only then can something new and different be born. Can we actually entertain the thought that it will happen in our lifetime?

Mat Callahan



SENDING IN THE TROOPS

"How long," asked Emma Goldman, "would authority and private property exist, if not for the willingness of the mass to become soldiers, policemen, jailers and hangmen?"

Photos arriving on the wire.
American soldiers boarding planes, dressed for success.
Designer helmets, makeup and Kevlar vests.
Leaden boots and M-16's so slick they look as if they were made in Hollywood.
Their bodies are taut as cocked weapons,
their hearts will become as hollow as the discarded shells.

They will bomb the square where the old men gather on Sundays to tell stories.
They will tear-gas the laughter that rides the sweet winds of tropical nights
and pillage the secrets of lovers.
They will train those who would torch your homes,
mutilate your past, and shrapnel your future--
They will teach them to rape you and rub your wounds with salt.
These are the terminators of sanity, the sentinels of pain.

I stare and stare at the faces.
Are these the faces a parent once caressed, once stroked by a lover?
Are the cheeks soft? Kissable?
I search their expressions for anger, fear, determination--
something that might render my enemy mortal....
But I see nothing.
They could be waiting for the subway doors to open,
or standing in a movie line.

How many of these faces will return to applause and college degrees
and the hope of a family they never will have?
How many will loose their minds or drink themselves to death,
stinking of urine against an alley wall?

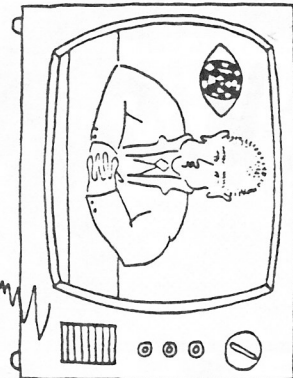
Don't you know, soldier, that you are nothing?
You with the patriotic baby blues,
you with your family in the ghetto,
you with the dark skin at the front of the line,
you who wanted to show them your parents don't have to speak English
for you to be American....
to be *somebody*....
You are a like a sad rusty rebuilt engine--
expendable.

You are like the little boy whose army boots and whose dreams are
too big for his feet because they are not his own--
shaking as he takes aim against his people.

Margot Pepper

Theoretical Science

by
Thoreau Spinoza Pushkin



...REALITY EXISTS IN A VACUUM
TUBE... TODAY'S NEWS IS
TOMORROW'S HISTORY....

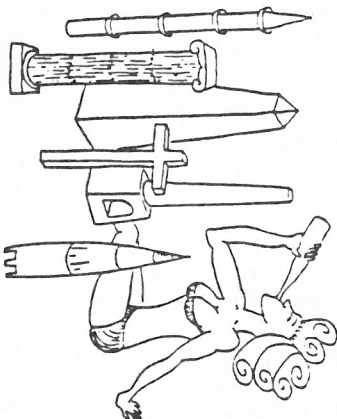
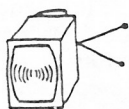
HISTORY IS THE ARENA OF INTERPRETATION.

PN * H THE PAST FILTERED THRU THE PRESENT OVER TIME.

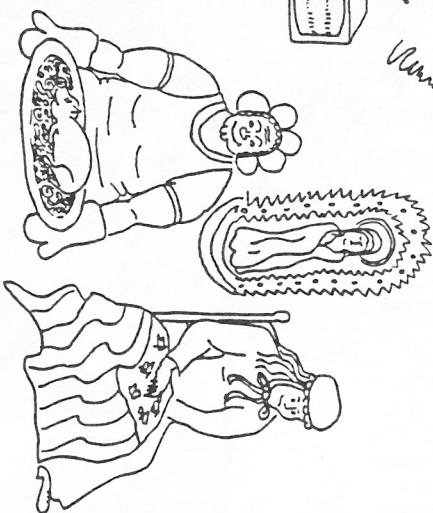
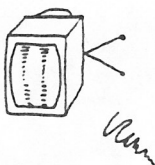


- HISTORY LESSONS:
1. LEARN IT OR REPEAT IT
 2. FUELS THE WILL OF GOD FOR CLASS STRUGGLE
 3. HISTORY IS MEDIATED
 4. WRITTEN VS. ORAL
 5. MIDTERM EXAM

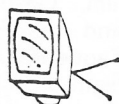
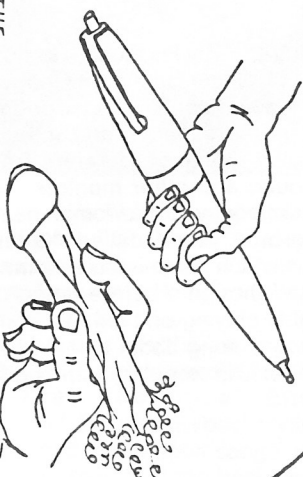
AND, OF COURSE, IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE!
NOW, LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE GREAT
MONUMENTS OF HIS-STORY!



IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FAIRNESS DOCTRINE—
LET'S HEAR IT FOR HER-STORY!



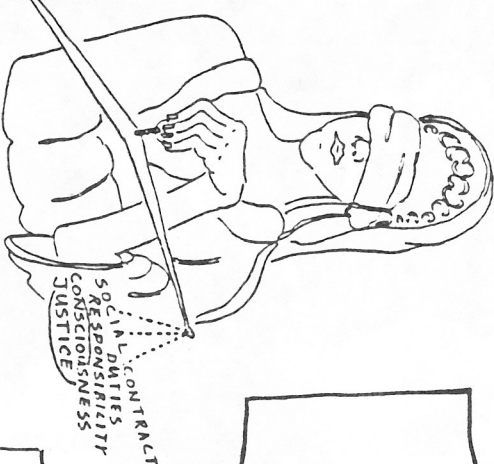
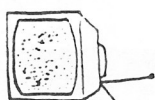
YES, THANK YOU, LADIES. AREN'T
THEY JUST LOVELY.... AND NOW, THE
TWO MOST INDELIBLE MARKERS OF
HISTORY—THE PEN AND THE PENIS!



VOILÀ, WE ARE MAKING HISTORY!



OUR FINAL FEATURE — THE CLASSICAL CONFRONTATION,
FUTURE HISTORY IN THE MAKING!



INDIVIDUAL
RIGHTS
WILL
MATERIALISM
(LAW)

CONTRACT
DUTIES
RESPONSIBILITY
CONSCIOUSNESS
JUSTICE

STAY TUNED

NEWS

N

REVIEWZ



Early Spring, colder than last Spring. A Saturday night's walk down 16th Street. It's dirty, it's alive, it's... teeming with out-of-town club-goers! The bridges and tunnels are moving with shiny metal... They're thirsty and wanna drink and drive just like the commercials. And dance until dawn. Now here's the crackheads. Delores still on the street after how many years with the pipe? The Roxie, in line for a Japanese animation film. On the corner the light changes and it's the smells of Pancho Villa Taqueria and drag queens starting the night at Esta Noche. People waiting at the moneybank machine with their plastic ready. The Bart Station, a hole in the ground, the new police *koban* with no police in it. Cross Mission Street. Late nite transfer? No thanks, I'm walking, no bus anyway. Victoria Theatre. Hmmm, rock shows coming...prostitutes? Just aimless street traffic. Wanna date? Smile, walk on. Fairway's open, maybe get some drinking water for Komotion coffee machine. 3 mariachi musicians cross the street, bass, twelve-string, violin, playing as they walk. Ai, ai, yi, yi. Andale! To the next bar! The All-Star Hotel now, the yuppie lamp shop. Motorcycles, bikes locked to telephone poles. Across the street it was U.S. Steel, but they sold it to SF Muni conveniently neglecting to mention that the ground floor is a toxic waste dump. Hey! I'm at Komotion! At last! Yo, what's happening tonight? \$5? I'm a member! How was your summer...?

Back on Aug. 12, Komotion Pictures went on the offensive for women's rights, responding to the recent Supreme Court decision allowing States the right to ban abortions. A film called "Holy Terror" was shown, detailing the aggressive and well organized activities of the Religious Right and its anti-abortion efforts. The camera brought us to local meetings of "Pro-lifers," where a self-righteous, redneck audience of mostly *men* discussed the tactics of blocking *women* from clinics.

Several live performances countered, including the famous "sex industry worker"/comediene, **Scarlot Harlot**, who has improved the words to hit songs like "Papa Don't Preach," by Madonna, by changing it to "Pope Don't Preach!" "Safe Sex Slut!" was another appropriate piece. Performance poet, stripper and activist, **Daisy Anarchy** performed her emotionally arresting piece about the Green River murders. And finally, **Sachiko**, a Japanese-female led band provided us with some solid grooves to top off a program that should send any anti-abortionists back into whatever hole they crawled out of!

In mid-August, a group of **Naropa** students came to town as part



of a West-of-the-Rockies tour. Naropa is a school in Boulder begun by Chogyam Trungpa, a radical Tibetan Buddhist. Our readers represented the "School of Disembodied Poetics," a reference to Jack Kerouac and other mentors. We heard music, poetry and a woman named **Liz** perform a piece called "Getting Ready," in which she mimed a woman's actions and thoughts before going out, her thoughts playing on tape. Of course there was one song about sleeping with famous poets, in keeping with Naropa tradition!

WANNABE TEXANS





LAS MADRES DEL CHE'

We held an end-of-the-month benefit for **I.M.U.**, an independent organization of several womens' groups and collectives working for social change in El Salvador. **Peter Plate** blasted through anger into the bedrock of action poetry without any regard for "limits" at all. **The Enormous Ensemble** combined Bulgarian vocal stylings with gospel and homemade songs using only spare occasional string backgrounds. A brief fiery set of Flamenco dancing by **Mercedes Molina and Sangre Brava** left the audience amazed. "**Las Madres del Che**" did one show (so far) and this was it. Containing members of **Bedlam Rovers**, **Penelope Houston**, **Camper Van Beethoven**, **Wannabe Texans** and others, Las Madres performed Argentine protest ballads sung in eloquent Spanish by **Federico Gil-Sola**. Violin, cello, charanga and acoustic bass joined with percussions to make a beautiful statement against repression. Later I caught Penelope Houston's band doing a Tom Waits song which gave me the energy to finish my wine! A video, "**WOMEN IN STRUGGLE**," documenting I.M.U.'s work in El Salvador, rounded out a very full night.

MERCEDES MOLINA & SANGRE BRAVA

The "endless summer" faithful showed up to the **S.U.R.F.** (So Utterly Rad and Far-out) Boogie in early Sept. Surf films, posters, boards, sex wax and two classic, instrumental surf bands, **The Shockwaves** and **Merman**, helped to shake off that Northern Cal. chill. And that wave-slave, queen of the dunes, surf chick and all-round rad personality, **Veronica Live** worked those turntables the rest of the night!

Once in a while fans of Flamenco get a chance to see a show that's not at a restaurant. We love paella, but we like Flamenco at Komotion when we can find **Mercedes Molina & Sangre Brava**. After a short set in August we invited them back for a whole night of dance, music and song. It's late in September, the room looks like an Andalusian cafe; bullfight posters, **Ernesto and Mercedes & co.** take us to Spain and deep in the heart of Flamenco!

Our Sept. 23 benefit was in support of **Infact's** General Electric boycott. These people have mucho well-researched information regarding GE's involvement in the arms race and other manner of mischief. Don't buy their lightbulbs or other products. They profit enough from nukeweapons already! **The Reflectors** played some wild covers in the barband tradition. **David Brian** came up with the best "acoustic" trio yet! **East Bay Ray** debuted his new band **Motion O**, delving into funky territory with "Marmelade."





"Drowning ain't so bad," says avid swimmer and photographer, **Annika Kahn**. She decided to transform her physical addiction into 16" x 20" black and white prints of swimmers as we've never seen them. **Bodies of Water** ran from August 30 through September.

WHAT GOES AROUND

Record (and Sociology) Rant

by Andrew Goodwin

It was of course Karl Marx who said that history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time as hip-hop. And last year a gentleman from the State Dept. (Mr. Fukuyama) reminded us of this when he announced the remarkable discovery of the End of History. Roughly translated, this turned out to mean the end of communism, socialism, liberalism, humanism, and indeed anything and everything but capitalism. Keen students of sociology will have noticed that this thesis samples rather liberally from Daniel Bell's well-known 1950's hit "The End of Ideology" - a little ditty that proposed that everyone, even the proles, had succumbed to *embourgeoisement* and now believed in capitalism. Recognize the riff? Yes, children, the idea of the end of ideology/history (which supposes that capitalism has no ideologies of its own, existing, as it so clearly does, in a state of Pure Truth) is in fact not only the *dominant* ideology of the world we inhabit, but has remained on the charts now for almost forty years. That's nearly as long as Dark Side of The Moon, isn't it?

Maybe like me you've recently had the misfortune to witness a sixties burnout droning on about how in Ye Olden Days (acid rock, Fillmore West, Haight-Ashbury, etc.) music was so much more eclectic, so lacking in boundaries, so experimental and open to cultural cross-fertilization. To which you say, have you heard Public Enemy, De La Soul, Prince, Neneh Cherry, lately? And he doesn't have the faintest idea what you're on about, because the last LP he bought was by Paul Carrack. He, like the State Department, believes that History has stopped.

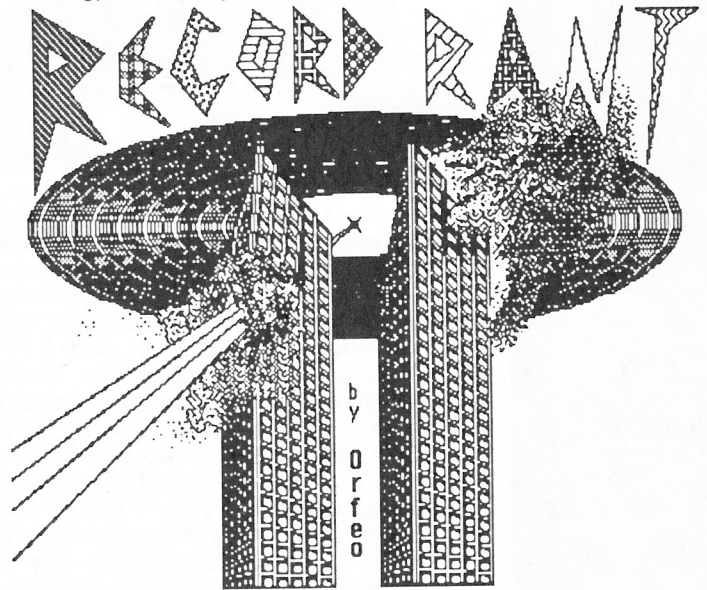
The originality thing is much overrated, always has been and contemporary trends in both rock and hip-hop have merely made that explicit. Pop history hasn't come to an end (my ex-hippie colleague wanted to write a book about The Death Of Rock - I didn't know whether to throw up or fall asleep,) but it is being plundered, as usual. And, as ever, you can steal wisely or stupidly. Newkirk, on his LP Funk City (Columbia) does it foolishly most of the time, ripping off Prince (himself a veritable case study in the end of pop history) with none of the *elan* of Terence Trent D'Arby, or even George Michael. Choosing your idols wisely is important, but if you merely *copy* Prince, without taking any of your own risks, you've missed the point of his history lesson.

Oakland's Digital Underground show a good deal more invention on the much-awaited debut album Sex Packets (Tommy Boy), and have clearly copped a comic riff or two from our guest philosopher George Clinton. Predictably, the "Sex" side is more interesting than the "Safe" side, although the latter does include the "Doowutchyalike" and "Humpty Dance" singles. Musically, there is some very radical stuff going on in the mix; but while I'm all for exploring sex-raps, DU's stories (a mix of right-on nods to Safe Sex, and boring "bitches" banality) get tedious over the course of a whole LP. Beaten to the political by Public Enemy and the psychedelic by De La Soul, DU are left patrolling too much Too Short territory for my liking. Nonetheless they do it with more wit than any of their contemporaries.

Following in NWA's footsteps, the idiotic Professor Griff rips off a PE lick here and there, on the Pawns In The Game 12" (Skiyywalker.) Griff deserves to be called Professor in much the same way that Swaggart earned the title Reverend: both inadvertently reveal the true nature of their chosen epithet. Griff, the man who used PE's cross-hairs to shoot the band in its own foot, demonstrates just how important is the *grain of the voice* in rap. He scans the raps

just like Chuck D, but his vocal chords just don't have that edgy thing that helps make PE so memorable. And on "Love Thy Enemy" Griff scores high on hubris, but you do wonder, on the basis of this lame copy of the PE soundscape, whether Griff can ever have loved music that he doesn't understand.

Now stop me if you think you've heard this one before, but in Britain the latest new theory of pop appears to be this: if your band is from Manchester, they are brilliant... and if not, they aren't. 808 State are from Manchester, and they are not brilliant, but they are quite good. Their debut LP Ninety (ZTT) can be categorized under the wonderful new heading of New Age House - or Philip Glass with a beatbox. It ends up sounding strangely like an update of progressive rock (no problem in my household, where the odd cut from Yes or King Crimson has been known to pollute the soundscape, whenever I'm *absolutely certain* that no-one is listening)... a mostly-instrumental nod to rock history that



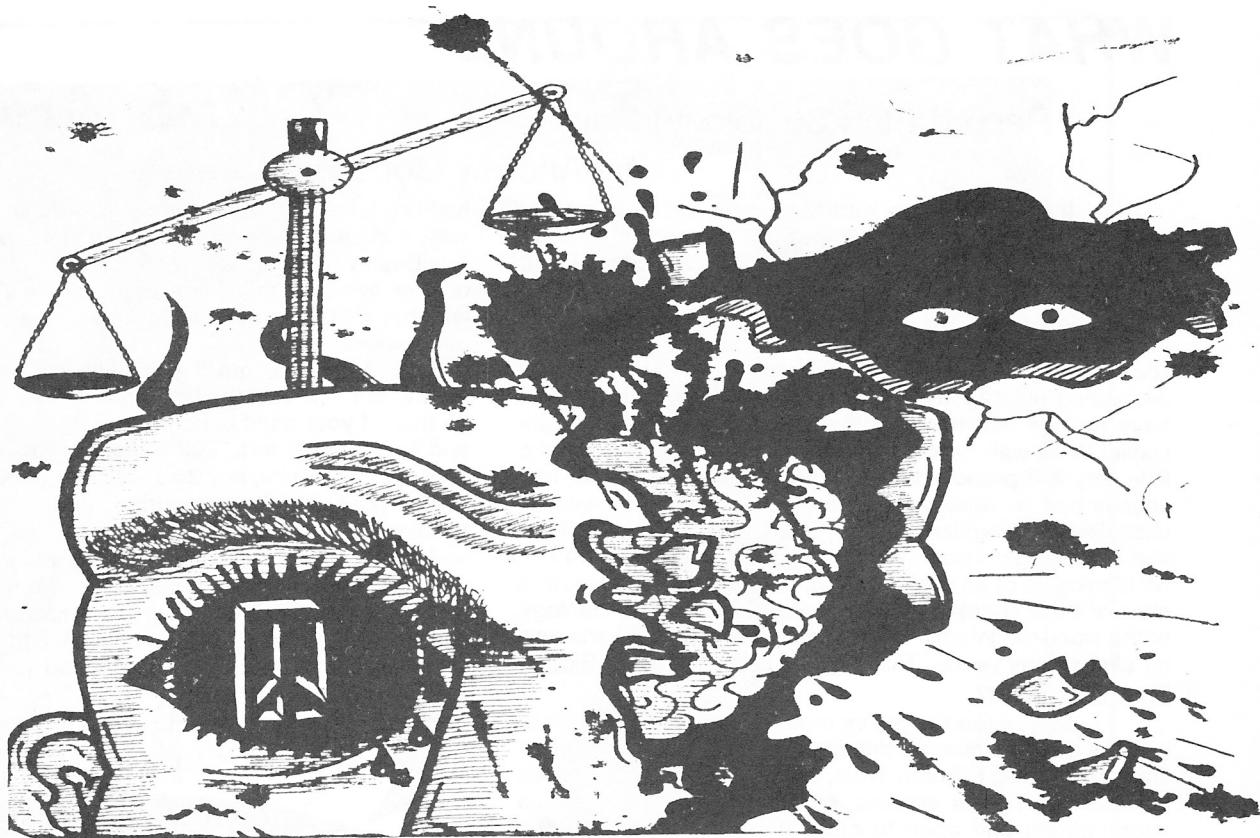
manages to suggest Robert Fripp, Depeche Mode, Bomb The Bass and New Order all at once.

The Stone Roses, who are also from Manchester, are currently making their first stab at Stateside success, with The Stone Roses (Silvertone, UK.) They are the critical darlings of the Brit-press right now, and certainly their songs are far more memorable than so many of their jingle-jangle compatriots. "I Wanna Be Adored" and "This Is The One" are fat slabs of adolescent angst that no-one should be without. But this album, too, is also a musical retreat (echoing, among others, The Monkees) which even features (on "Made Of Stone") the use of *phasing* (remember "Itchycoo Park"?) Actually the best Manchester band is James, but they don't have a new album, so I have no product to plug. And the best new British album is Hats (Virgin), from the Blue Nile, which everyone agrees is about one tenth as brilliant as their 1985 debut Walk Across The Rooftops. Which is to say not how poor the new record is (it's a wonderful collection of atmospheric, languid balladry,) but how transcendent was their debut.

Hats is low key, melancholy, and obsessively sad, an exercise in classic songwriting and meticulous, moving production. But sometimes, even in the Age of Endless Repetitions, you just can't beat the *original*.

Mr. Goodwin, published author and pop music critic extraordinaire, is filling in for Orfeo, who is on vacation... yeah, right... sure... uh-huh...

Christmas



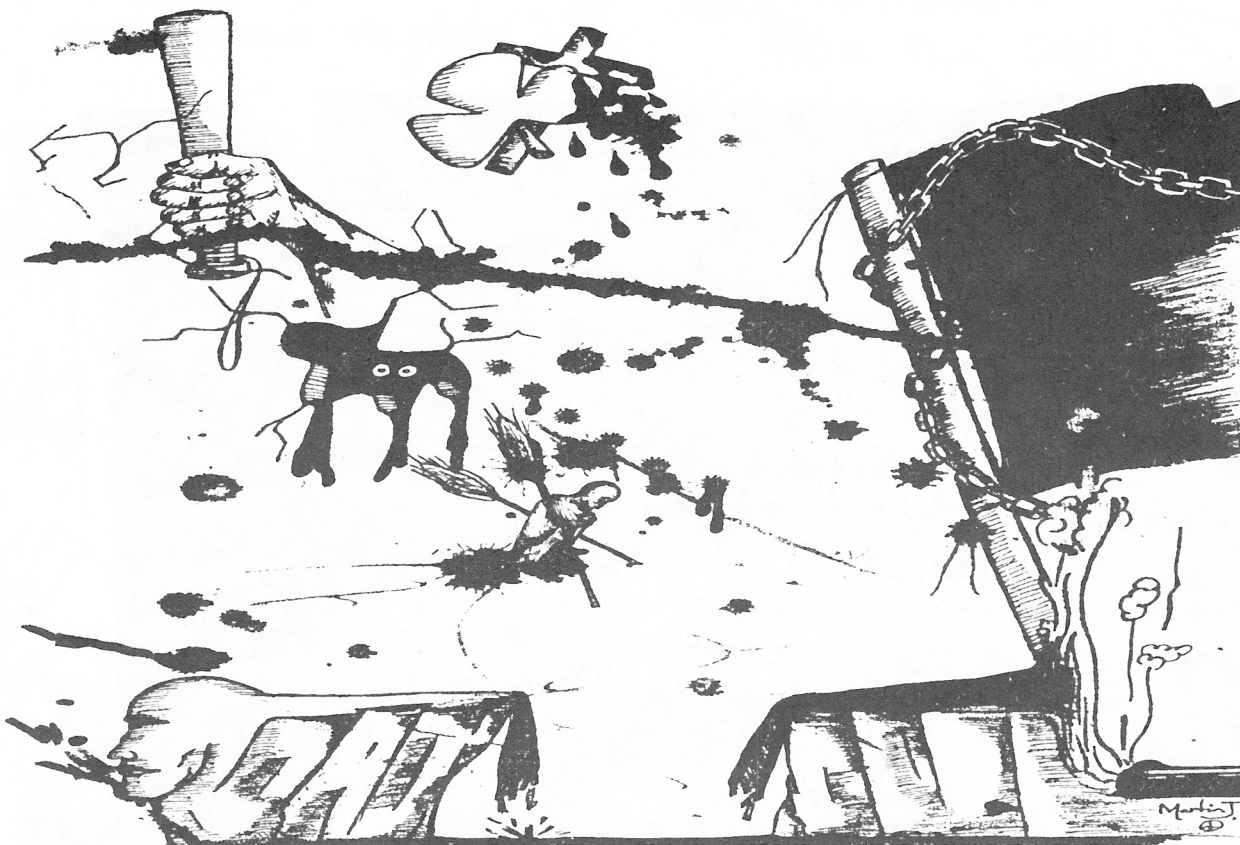
I had to work on Christmas Day--driving a cab. Although I never look *forward* to driving Yellow 562 for 10 hours, starting at 5:30 a.m., for some reason I was in a good mood about driving on Christmas. Perhaps it was the ultimate excuse not to deal with relatives and personal obligations, or maybe it was the novelty of it, but I figured I'd take it easy, visit a few friends and get into the holiday spirit. Call it dumb, cute, or whatever, but I even shed my "don't-fuck-with-me" cab driving attitude for one day by wearing one of those red and white Santa hats, and bought a little stocking filled with candy to hang on the seat. I figured, what the hell, I feel like getting into it a little and maybe some fares will get a kick out of it.

Like most people I know, I usually think of Christmas as a depressing period to endure, politically reprehensible, and largely a marketing scam for businesses to make millions. But this year I found myself thinking back on Christmas with fond memories. Although my family wasn't religious, Christmas was always a big deal, and as a child I loved it. Afterall, Christmas day was *different*. Looking outside, the early morning sky would seem especially clear and sparkly, the air cold and still with a touch of frost on the ground, and there was an unusual calm to the world. It even seemed like all that stuff about "peace" and "goodwill" actually came true for a day...

It was still dark that morning when a call came over the radio for "Army and Harrison." This inevitably means the housing projects--the ones where a friend of mine was shot at close range because he tried to break up a fight over a crack deal. The dealer even yelled, "Now you're involved!" before blasting him with a shotgun. He survived and is slowly recuperating, although they couldn't get all the pellets out of his face and chest...

I pulled up in front and left the car in "drive." After a few minutes a teenage Black woman came out with a baby and got in the cab. She looked like she had been up all night, and my first thought was that she *and* the baby are probably addicted to crack. She told me she wanted to go across town, and my next thought was that she wouldn't have the money. (Unfortunately, experience makes you think like that...) Being Christmas, I decided not to demand the money up front and if she ran out on me I'd just forget it... As we whisked through the deserted city streets, she and the baby were completely silent and neither one seemed to notice the candy hanging on the seat. When we arrived she paid me and vanished in the dark.

Amid thoughts and speculations about this young woman's life, someone flagged me on a dark corner bus stop in Pacific Heights. She was going out to 47th Ave. in the Richmond. A white woman in her 40's, she told me she was a hospice worker. She said people call them the "angels of death" because they are called at the *very end*. The man she was taking care of had a colostomy and some other term that meant he had a bag for both urinating and defacating and he also had some kind of automatic injector for pain. She told me "they" get to do whatever "they" like at the end, since there's absolutely no treatment left. She said the family was happy because he joined them at the table and even drank a little wine. By this time we arrived at the address. As I drove away my stomach felt queasy and my enthusiasm seemed to have crashed out by Seal Rock somewhere; I dead-headed back into the city, seeking solace from schmaltzy Christmas



songs on the radio.

Hours later I picked up "Tim," a Black queen who was still tipsy from the night before. Tim was a lot of fun and a very welcome relief. He rattled on quite openly about being gay and knowing it since he was four or five years old, about his childhood in Savannah, Georgia, about his brother who has been a real friend (in spite of Tim being gay,) and his stern father who has not talked to him in years because of it. He talked about boyfriends, close friends who have AIDS, and others. All in all, his "joie de vivre" attitude, in spite of living in a racist, homophobic, backward world, was an inspiration. It was also a real exception...

The rest of the day rolled on, so to speak, from one living casualty to another. On Divisadero I picked up a bitter ex-cab driver. He told me that one year Mr. Steele (the president of Yellow Cab,) fired a bunch of drivers, but deliberately waited until just before Christmas... I remember picking up a young Latin couple from Turk and Webster. The guy was wearing a leather jacket with "Metallica" painted on the back. They were going to "The Hall" (of Justice, that is,) and rode in complete silence. (I wondered why they had to go there on Christmas, maybe to help a friend or relative that's been arrested?...) Afterward I stopped at Carls Jr. at 5th and Market ('cause it was the only place open,) and saw this disheveled homeless man in a wheelchair who looked like a Vietnam vet. He waited in line to order a glass of water, for which he was charged .25, while tourists with kids looked on uncomfortably. I also picked up an Iranian man, a self-possessed yuppie type, who was divorced and late to visit his son and ex-wife in Noe Valley. Depressed and exhausted, I headed back to the lot.

There was nothing unusually bad about the day; it was the *normalcy* that made it so sickening. And the only difference was me--mistaking hopeful thoughts and idealistic fantasies for a reality that doesn't change on holidays, but just keeps staring you in the face. I wondered what the hell I *expected* today to be like. While waiting in the gas line at Yellow Cab, I finally made myself believe that somewhere in the jumble of poverty, anger, disillusionment and desperation they call "The Real World," there is *something* else.

Call it hope, or DNA, but there is a groping on the part of humanity--some undefined, subconscious desire to live with each other as the family we really are... And in some ways *Christmas* is the symbol of this for our society, although the holiday itself is a corruption of everything it's *supposed* to mean... Even worse, it's the one day that all those rich bastards, politicians and well-intentioned college students go down to Glide Church, dish out Christmas dinner to the homeless, and then leave feeling morally righteous, like they've done their great duty to mankind...

It's funny, but cab driving itself is founded on a principle that seems out of place in modern industrial society--*trust between complete strangers*. And those strangers include every race, every age, the rich and the poor, broken people and those that'll never be broken... Next year I probably won't wear a Santa hat, give away candy, or hold any ridiculous expectations of waking up to a changed world... But then again, maybe I will...

D

a

y

Jones

Leaning forward on the splintery bench
it's not the drug he's jammed up against
but money / inhaling its burnt-insulation
breath while its plasma
of calculated hysteria zeroes in

He's been redesigned into a cash register
covered with stale sweat and bruises
gulping and snapping at small bills
trembling insatiably
at the sight of a friend's new TV

He gets up and huddles away eastward
still plotted on money's ice-blue grid
as it rides him out beyond the point
of diminishing returns
to the point where he'll vanish

Adam Cornford

Mary Grace Mcghee

Lionel McNeely
John Paul Bail

Jua
Asila

SEAST OAKLAND

INVADERS SAN FRANCISCO

Police
Presence

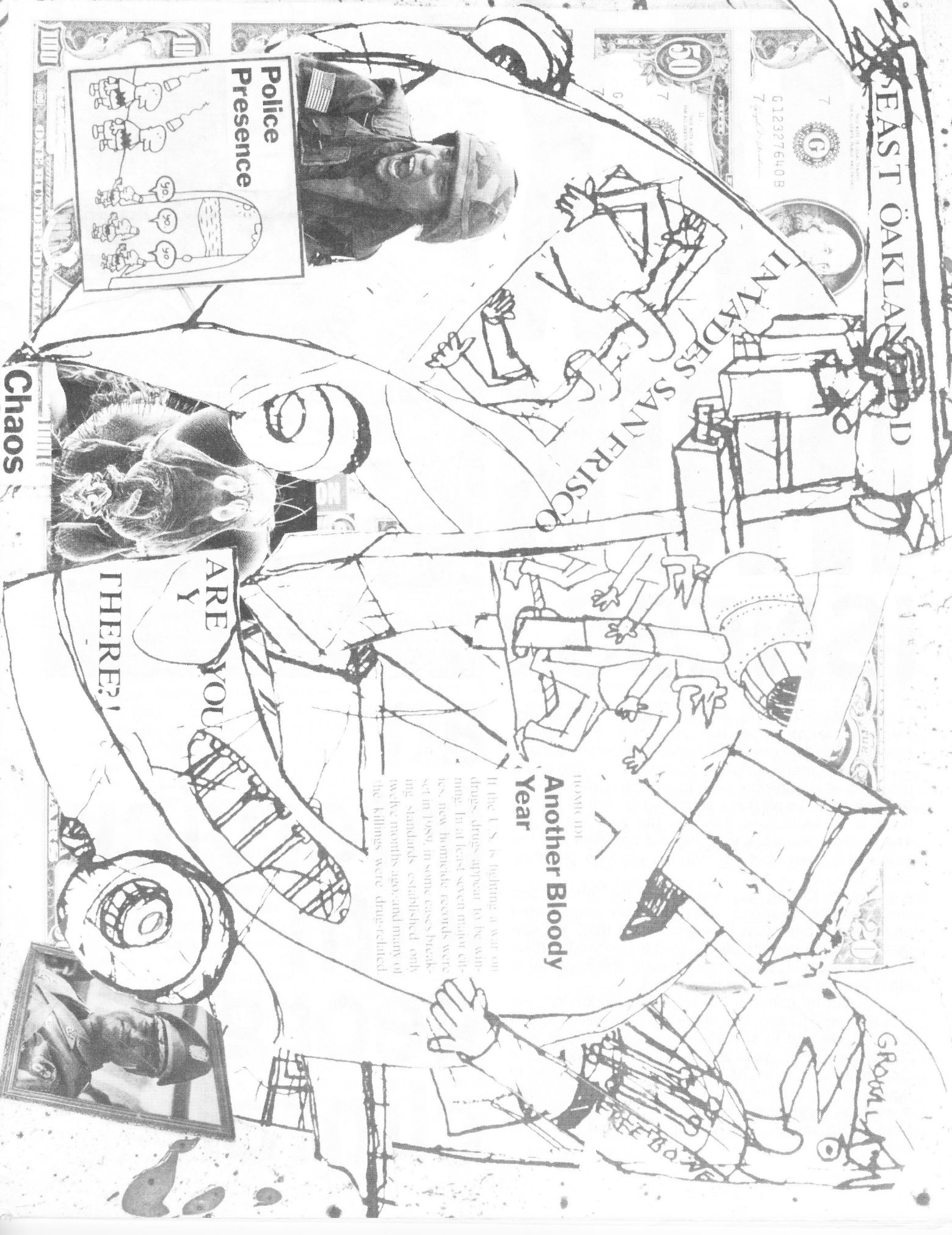
ARE YOU
THERE?!

HOMICIDE
Another Bloody
Year

If the U.S. is fighting a war on drugs, drugs appear to be winning. In at least seven major cities, new homicide records were set in 1989, in some cases breaking standards established only twelve months ago; and many of the killings were drug-related.

Chaos

Gravel



[illegible]

an
interview
with
george
clinton

...A Cuban guy made that his introduction when he met the group. He'd probably been turned on the way I had 15 or 20 years before that. He saw that we could play with all this stuff that looked serious to a lot of people, or sounded pseudo-philosophical to other people--we could play with that.

14

The next Parliament album is gonna be called **Maximum Isness The Perpetual Party Machine Upsouth.**

Throughout your career there seems to be a concept running through all the jams...

YOU STILL HERE! And the pursuit is the party. The pursuit of happiness is what's happening. As long as you can pursue it. As long as you can keep an *idea* that you are pursuin', that you don't give up the pursuit.

But then you say somethin' like "You shouldn't 'nuf bit fish," that's serious...

Nonsensical. Serious as hell, but nonsensical. Because at a certain point--so what. At a certain point you're part of the universe, whatever that big wheel is--whatever that is. Lightning can strike a baby, you can do all the good things da da da da, but earthquakes, whatever, all that stuff is not personalized at all. There is a positive way to give in to whatever the big thing is. You do the best you can, and then after that it's *funk* it. To worry is the sin, cause you worry about it and panic and do somethin' wrong.

But at the same time there's a lot to worry about.

Speak to people throughout the world?

Everybody feels they need that next... they're bored shitless. 'Cause everybody now can get a glimpse of it. It ain't the end result, but even TV is excitin' to some people. But it ain't goin' to take them long to catch up to that.

That is the whole trip, we done run out of myths. We done got as big as what we'd pictured God to be. As what we'd *pictured* it to be. The picture needs to be enlarged, because it is something that supercedes all of it! Regardless of whether it's something we care about personally or whether it's an intellectual concept.

What do you think the forces are that perpetuate the idea that the myths of the past are still happening, or for that matter, the Placebo Syndrome?

Illuminatis?

Yeah, right... Is that what you're talkin' about?

Yeah, whoever *that* is!

Whoever it is...

Whatever it is!

I'm not tryin' to pin you down, I'm just tryin' to get more specific.

... we done run out of myths. We done got as big as what we'd pictured God to be.

There's a lot to do the best you can about. Once you've done the best you can, you should be able to honestly, morally, and every other kind a' way--leave it. Because at that point--so what--you can't do everything. We just happen to have something we call reasoning and logic, but it breaks down somewhere. 'Cause what goes up don't have to come back no more. That used to be the proof of logic. What goes up has to come down--it don't no more.

At some point you can't put your entire life on the words, or the meaning of the words, or what you call reality. 'Cause the 60's showed you--hell, San Francisco showed you--this is a perfect example, one of the most beautiful places in the world, they have alternative realities that coexist all over this place! And it's so perfect. I don't care what people might say, the ratio of survival is definitely better than most places. I mean mentally, you know, so... you do the best you can and then *funk* it, not fuck it. But as close as you possibly can to your maximum isness, your maximum potential, as opposed to that placebo. Even the thought of "you don't know what the fuck to do."

Right now I'm into, like, Campbell--Joseph Campbell--the dude that just died. We need some new myths, cause we done surpassed all the ones that were fascinating to us. Peter Pan--fuck that--we can fly all over this motherfucker now! You know what I mean? Star Trek and Star Wars are the best two myths that we've got.

Do you think that they're universal, that they

No, I'm just saying whatever it is, 'cause it's too easy to be local--or *they*. Who the fuck is *they*--they're just like you and me. They just had a bigger chance to be a little more larcenous than we can be. We're larcenous on whatever level we are on. So you can't really say nothin' about the President, or nobody else... They just had more opportunity to fuck up than you did. I mean, you can still wanna change what they're doin', but at the same time, slowly be changin' what you're about too. 'Cause otherwise it jus' be a swap. 'Cause when you get there you do the same shit. I think *life* now is what's happenin'.

When you talk about the swap, is that why the people over in Eastern Europe are gettin' pissed off, 'cause they just swapped one for the other.

No they ain't, but the hype of what we're about just got to 'em, I mean televisions, double cassette decks, and shit... I mean the first thing they did when they got across the wall was went back and got some of the wall and start selling it. They got right into the capitalist concept, which is probably alright... Over there, at least everybody's eatin' though. We should be able to learn from that side of it. Here we got what they're lookin' for, but we got a whole bunch of people homeless and starvin'. That's our price for this, and I hope they can see that, as they come into this. But we should definitely be able to see where they come from, everybody was at least medically taken care of, and they was fed and they was housed. The basic needs should be social.

Well, it's probably true that the American media hype is just the American media hype, it's not what's really goin' on. The people themselves are not necessarily foolish enough to think that a TV is going to solve all their problems.

No, no, no... But just the fact that they couldn't have it, was probably more tempting to them. But, let's face it makin' money and havin' money is a good part of it! It is about that now, but it's also about understanding that the people that ain't gettin' the opportunities to make those monies... I mean you're full of shit if you expect them to stay still for it while you take all the money, and don't give them an opportunity to git none!

I mean it's dangerous... So it's cool to make money, but it's not even safe to have the money if people ain't eatin'. Because if you expect them to not eat and not say nothin' too, then you are crazy. It's just a matter of time before it's instinctive for them to attack... Not thinkin'... Once it's life and death, nature takes over. They ain't got no choice but to steal, rob, kill... If we don't understand that, then we all in trouble because the bigger ones front off, in front of the next ones, and we try to be like that, and we don't notice that the ones behind us ain't got nothin', they gonna come right through us first, kill us and the next ones

and the next ones until they get right to the top. Unless we realize we've all been set up. Same way with cops--they been set up. They ain't no different than us...

But there's a certain mentality, though, that does come from their position.

That's all it is, too. But they refuse to pay 'em enough to teach 'em a better mentality. All they had to do was educate them alittle better, where they could handle people, and understand why people are *like* that. You gotta understand that a motherfucker that's broke and hungry ain't gonna be easy to cope with. And to think that force is gonna keep him there? That's

Whoever try that one gotta be slick enough to convince big business that the whole motherfuckin' market is gonna be fucked up if you don't do *somethin'* soon. Cause now all the poor people of the world is gettin' together.

Do you see that happening?

Because of TV, because of satellites, because of instant communication, everybody realize we're all in the same boat. And there are very few at that top. That illuminate top or that money top, or whatever that concept is that goes way the fuck back! Right on through churches and all that, there's a set of knowledge that they all agree on somewhere. Once people of the world realize *that*, then you gonna have simple, "OK, you ain't doin' shit."

I'm not talkin' about the long run, but do you see that happening in the changes that are going on now.

Something is happening so dynamic *right now*. What's that saying.. necessity is the mother of invention... and it's needed like a motherfucker right now! Otherwise the boredom and all the shit that can be manipulated through that... I mean people walk around shootin' people down for no reason, not on drugs, not a Vietnam vet, not nothin'! And the minute we start worryin' how crazy that person was--that ain't the question--the question is, "Will I be next?" That's a disease or somethin' that's causin' that. And all that we've been able to focus on is that people are crazy, and punish them--*that ain't no answer*. There's somethin' that's gettin' us all one by one. And each one used to have an excuse--he's a Vietnam vet, he's despondent, he's on drugs, da da da... All those excuses is out the window now. It could very well be just like what causes cancer, and all those things we didn't know about in the 60's. It could be the radio waves or the microwaves... that's a lot of bombardment that's bein' shot around here.

It ain't necessarily gotta be *drugs*. Drugs ain't as deep as it's bein' made out to be. I should know 10,

I'm sure they know that "No" is the greatest aphrodisiac there ever was.

ridiculous! And just cause you can keep provin' that there's criminal elements in a situation like that, and convince the rest of the people that "see, they need to be beat up." That's only gonna work until the people in middle America realize all this is a plot. How do you *expect* a hungry motherfucker to act?! Once they understand that those people are *not* their problem... Why can't they take the money they have left over, now that they don't have to fight Communism so much now, just to be hip, Bush could say--let me take 3 billion dollars and give it to all the homeless.

The likelihood of that is very small...

Big business wouldn't let him if he tried.

15 people dead--OD'd. You should know 10 or 15... I don't know that many. I know Len Bias. I know a lot of people that go to the hospital on any given night thinkin' their heart gonna jump out, but that's not the same. I know a lot of people that get shot. All that's about money, because it's illegal. That's all that's about. All the statistics they use to show drugs are fucked up--that's not true. If they sold it in hospitals with no commercials, no advertisement whatsoever, but only in hospitals, and make it where you have to go through the psychiatric ward to pick it up, and see a few people, a few inmates, let you buy it, but remind you where you're treadin'. But not commercial!

I don't even drink, but alcohol wouldn't even

be where it's at, if it weren't for naked chicks, and little dogs, and all the money spent on advertising. So they give you that story--look what happened with alcohol--there'll be drug addicts all over the place. Uh-uh. Especially cocaine, it's a "hip concept," anyway, it's about the hype that's put on it. And I'm sure that they know that "No" is the greatest aphrodisiac there ever was. It should be illegal to have them try to tell people to say no. Cause they turnin' people out with that. And I'm afraid they *know* it.

Well, somebody does seem to know it, because as optimistic as I'd like to be, and as much in agreement as I am, with what you're saying, there's definitely another side to it, which is that along with the power of myth that's been dissipated through our culture, we need somethin' new, but the powers that be ain't gonna give it up. And that's a force that manifests itself in a lot of different ways.

People got pushed all around the world. We got pushed over here, we got pushed over there... Something been doin' that shit from both sides, all the time. But I think you should always be tryin' to protect that self. By self, I mean the entire consciousness, the entire *life*. I think, from animal, plant, we should always be tryin' to do that. Now sometimes you have to eat it, but as soon as you don't have to eat it no more, your instincts just start protectin' it. Some people be overzealous about certain things... but that force makin' us balance it back and forth, we have to start understandin' that people be doin' stuff they can't even explain, but there's somethin' that's makin' them do it, and they're doin' it fucked up and wrong... But the element of what they're tryin' to say should be thought about.

Anything that anybody's passionate about, I get past the person who's sayin' it, and if there's more than one of them doin' it, what else could they be tryin' to say? Why are they so motivated? Cause people ain't born mean or evil. I don't believe that!

We keep gettin' tricked by the "lone crazy man" that shoot the president, the "lone crazy man" that shoot Martin Luther King, the "lone crazy person..." Just after seeing the Panthers trip, where they got infiltrated and the FBI did this and that--it show's you... Mission Impossible is one of the best shows for that kind of scene. *That* is reality. I mean they infiltrated schools, the class rooms, the boy scouts... Sure, so you can't be too ready to jump on nobody. I just try to look at "what is that for?" I know it's something I don't want to *be* like. But I'd rather know what caused him to be like that, as opposed to how much I could hate the person. I'm sure they wouldn't want to be like that too, if they had the ability to *want*.

Well also there's that old song, "gotta do wrong before anybody notice me." I mean for a lot of young people, they're gonna act up just to get some attention.

That's the motivation. That's what keeps us growin' anyway. I mean Grace Slick said, "Kids should make their parents puke every five years." Cause we get into a mode that seems safe and we stay there, and it probably ain't safe, cause we probably need to move on. But kids come around, and say I don't like none of that. I'm gonna change this... And if you tell 'em don't do it they like that even more. So I think some



commercial forces know that now. Like the concept of "the liar," on television--the "Isuzu." That was the number one commercial that year! People *like* the negative. At a certain point you could make 'em like the positive, too, if you keep runnin' that negative. But the circles gettin' faster and faster--but we're gettin' ready to jump off the planet...

Well, in a way we have. Have you seen that movie, "For All Mankind?"

There's a certain amount of the nationalistic flag waving shit, 'cause it was the United States that went up there, but it's still very emotional cause you see these human beings jumpin' around the moon!

It's much more emotional for me now, 'cause when it first happened, I was trippin' and I said, "Well so what, I been all out through here!" But now, havin' settled all the way back down, and bein' able to look at that, *damn!* That motherfucker is up there. And that other rocket that keep on goin', the Pioneer, and havin' seen Star Wars, 2001 and all that shit--the 20th century has been a *bitch!*

I got a chronological book on the 20th century... Before this motherfucker everything was *prehistoric!* But in this century? We took some giant steps, and they say we gonna take 'em thousands of times further. You know that means... lasers dissipating atoms, you know, like "Beam me up Scotty!" It's in that realm. Whatever you think of is possible.

Yeah, well, we're catchin' up to our own imagination.

So we're gonna have to have some new

myths. I'm scared to think of what they're gonna be now...

Do you think they're gonna be expressed more in cultural terms than in religious terms though?

It's gonna be seriously *international*, cause the community is so small now. But then you have certain isolated tribes in certain places--they got some answers for us, they got some *vibes* for us, and some validity. And I mean a lot of ones we haven't heard about in this past century. I mean a lot of African tribes, South American tribes... A lot of what they're about is gonna come into play. I just think different styles is into play. Like logic has been into play since Rome, since Plato. It's done played out now because the most illogical shit is what's happenin'!

Even the scientists are recognizing nonlinearity and all that...

And before logic came in they was dealin' with Mount Olympus, Zeus, and they saw him every day! I mean that was the reality. They say old civilization and new civilization. There's gettin' ready to be another one. It could be magic... hocus pocus... ain't no tellin' what this motherfucker's gonna be! I think us wishin' for it is what makes it a reality.

And workin' for it. I mean your music is an expression of your wishes and your hopes...

And that you ain't gonna die by hearin' this stuff that you ain't never heard... Rap proved that to me! I mean that's the most unlikely rhythmic, dissonant, time against each other. Havin' 'em in the wrong key... but the kids... you might not appreciate it, but it just shows you, you can appreciate much more than what you thought you could. So what might be ugly, might get better and better. 'Cause if you start appreciatin' abstract art, that mean, you gettin out there, brother! 'Cause, what do you *see*? I don't see nothin', and then after awhile you learn... I mean I did it with abstract music. I mean serious modern jazz, I say wait a minute, you *defintely* on somethin'! But after not doin' drugs no more, funk is the same concept. The more you can be relaxed about goin' into some abstract places, it's comfortable.

Well, I saw your last show... and it's not just a funky beat. I mean what attracted me was that it was such a group feeling.

There's a lot of people that been likin' us that feel like they're *part* of the group. Most of our fans always felt they was part of the group. Once you been a funkadelic, you'll always be a funkadelic! And I'm glad because it's fun, and I know it's bigger than any group or any record. I mean we can't even get on the radio... but motherfuckers love this shit!

Newz and Reviewz from page 7

Pamela Z's half-hour set contained a beautiful song about pearl farms ("Cultured Pearls") and she was joined by a fine percussionist who added an interesting dimension to her musical vignettes. Who was that drummer? **Sharkbait** industrialized the air to the point of blowing up a GE tv set, a new way to protest GE and lousy programming. One of their drummers played in a drumcage that looked like a miniature torture chamber. Maybe I was hallucinating from the smoke.

On Sept. 27, while "**East Oakland Invades San Francisco**" (or at least the Komotion art gallery,) on stage, **Ricardo Anderson** improvised his way from tense dramatic sketches to full-throated belting to over-the-top lunacy, delighting the audience. At the other end of the room, Chef **Mondo Hagar Jim** performed his own magic with the wonderful meals he feeds us every "last Wednesday."

We held two benefits in October, the first for **Voices for Choice**, which was part of a Bay Area-wide series of shows to benefit Planned Parenthood and pro-choice groups. **Bana Witt** performed songs and performance poetry utilizing interesting vocal effects, while singer/songwriter **Lisa Palty** did an acoustic performance of original songs like, "I Wanna Have Lou Reed's Baby," her voice moving effectively between understatement and soulful shrieks. **Citizen Jane**, a female pop-rock trio ended the night with well-crafted songs and a powerful beat. Look for their 12" single and their dates around town.



PAMELA Z

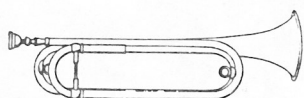


The other benefit was the **Komotion "Bail Out" Show**, and we'd like to thank all the participants for helping with that cash infusion we need every now and then to stay out of the red... The show began with a program of short films, demonstrating the budding talent and diversity of local filmmakers, pulled together by **B.C. Productions**. It continued with the relaxed, friendly atmosphere created by two of Komotion's fave bands--**The Bedlam Rovers** and **Wannabe Texans**. Come back any time ya'll!

It started as an idea...a scarification/tattoo festival...then it became reality. The crowd thrilled to "**Morocco, Body and Soul**," one film in a trilogy about music, religion and culture in North Africa. We want the other two films, Craig! "**Trance Dance in Bali**" and "**Floating in Air**" were also shown, taking us from Mead and Bateson's examination of Bali to the skin-piercing rituals of Malaysia. Then **T.J.** had her navel pierced live on stage! People were getting their tattoos ready! Other people couldn't get in! **Fat Chance Belly Dance & the Massive Musicians of Palooka** hypnotized the punters with the definitive American belly-dance set; half an hour of snakecharming folkloric grace. Before more than twenty tattoos could be modeled, **Glorius Clitorius** were in action. The Velvet Underground meets the Shaggs on stepped-on ecstasy in the basement of the Pussycat Theatre's grunge feminism locker! They



rocked out in a flurry of dreadlocks and sweat. As more tattoos were unveiled, **Less is More** followed, exploring yet another side to the light/sound spectrum. I didn't get a tattoo 'cause I crashed in the shed. All in early October. What else was gonna happen?



FAT CHANCE
BELLYDANCE



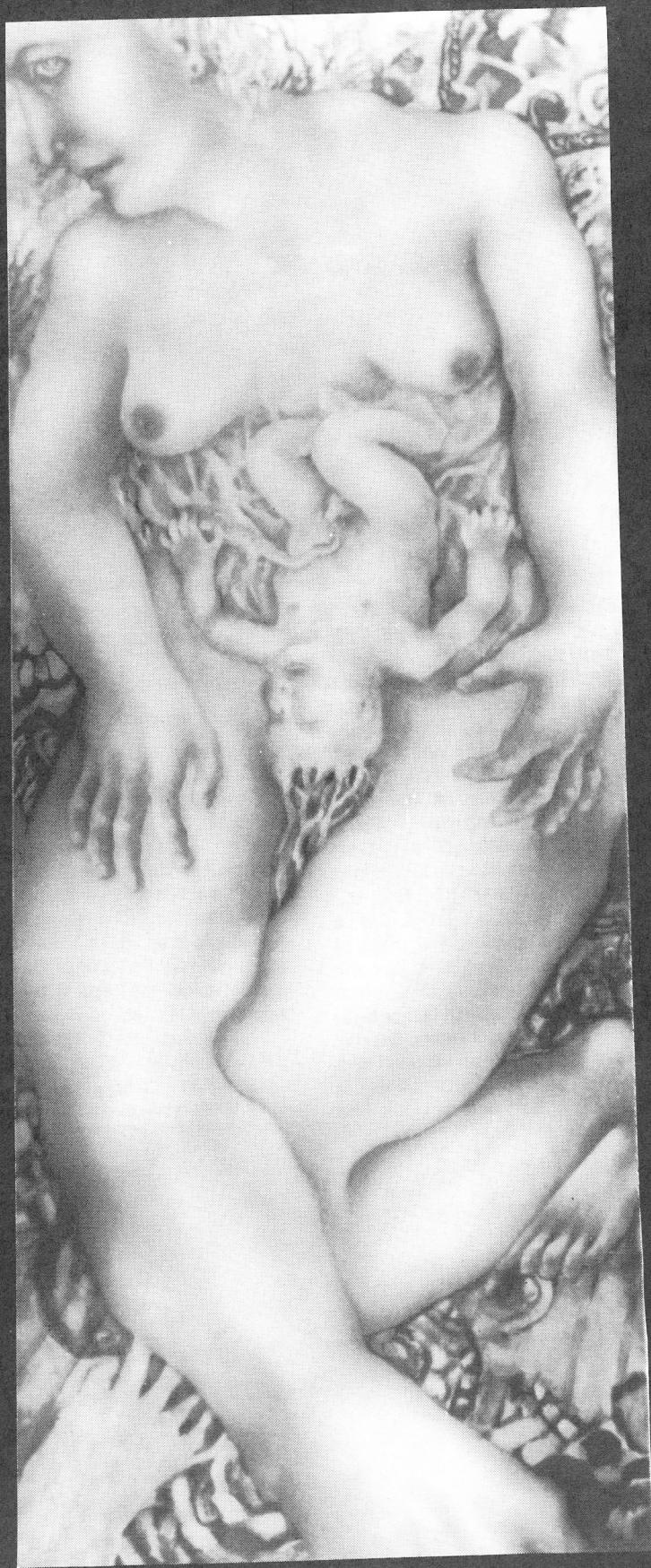
Rebel Poets/Words Made Flesh is a tape released on **Revolutionary Records**. Many of the poets and musicians who recorded on the tape performed at the release party on Oct. 25. In keeping with the themes of the tape, many political and social issues came under the scrutiny and humor of the readers. A few of the poets: **Jack Hirschman, Sara Menafee, Jerry Anomie, Don Paul, Alfonso Texidor**. Musicians included **Jon Karr, John Baker, George Cremaschi** and **Lewis Jordan**. To the improvised sounds of drums, guitar, bass, keys and sax the poets wailed until late. Later, other readers included **Elizabeth Drechsel** and **David Watts**. Local mixed-media artist **Albina** showed her work in the front gallery. The Rebel Poets tape is available at Komotion and at book and record stores.

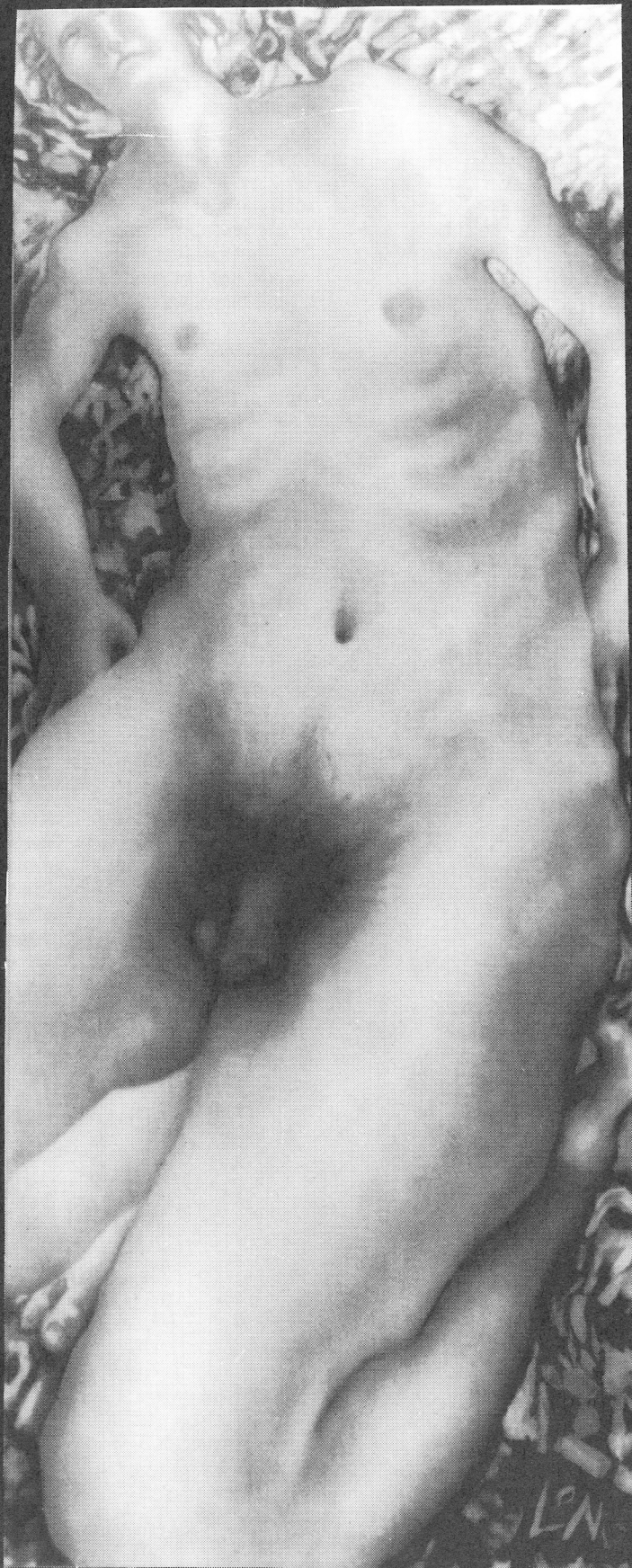
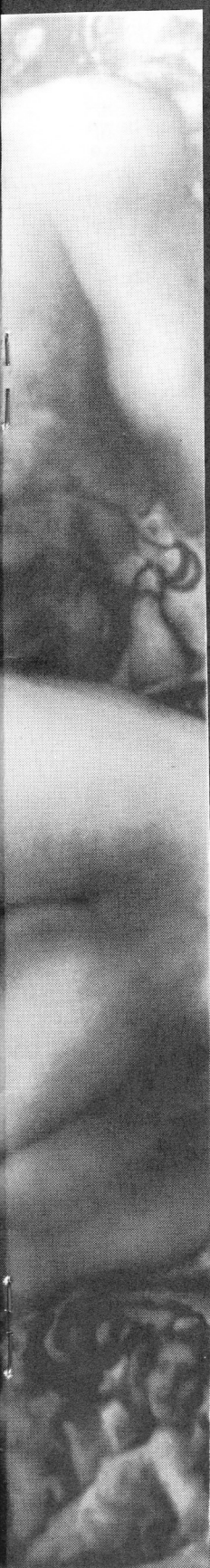
Q. R. HAND

ALFONSO
TEXIDOR

see page 22







People often describe to me what they see in my paintings--then they ask me if what they've seen is really in there. I tell them, "if you see it, it's in there." --artist **Mary Long**



DOG PARTY

don bajema



A most bizarre crowd showed up to Komotion for the **Halloween Costume and Dance Party**. Hot on the tabloid headlines for slapping a cop, **Zsa Zsa Gabor** was seen arrogantly pleading her case to anyone who would listen, while **Batgirl** hung upside-down in the hallway and sadistic nurse **Rachet** threatened party goers with a baseball bat. Further inside, a guy with no eyes and grey hair down to his navel wearing a Shriners hat was being knighted with a light sword by the **Harbinger of Death and Giver of Life** (a sort of ghost of a "Mutant Ninja Radio Person Turtle" blown away by General History of the Crocs with his 80 calibre, bolt action saddle cannon for food, of course...) See rare one-of-a-kind photos!

The lights came up on the stage revealing a huge barrel slowly being filled with water. Three actors began a play called **Dog Party** by **Don Bajema**. Hey, it's just the story of a kid who put dogs in a barrel, pushing their noses under the greasy water with a broom handle and then, just--when--they--had--almosstttt--drowned--Kazaam! He rescues them, making himself into God...

The lights go down, the music goes UP! **DJ Cutthroat** and **Kayumangul** are spinning the freshest beats and before you know it, everyone's dancing--in fact, *no one's left running the show!* A small but mighty crowd spilled sweat on the dance floor 'til the wee hours. It was one of those strange and wonderful nights when *everyone went crazy!*



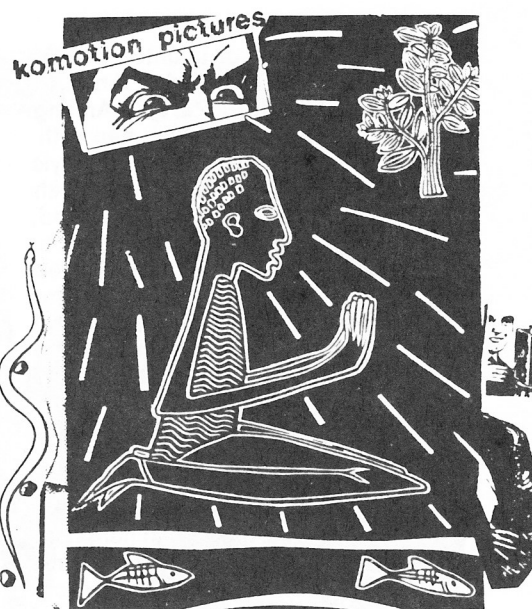
After the Scarification Affair (remember?) we wasted no time and mounted the **Anti-Routine Circumcision** benefit. Sure to raise a few eyebrows, the question is, who's concerned? Those who've been cut, those who don't know whether to cut the kid, and those concerned about the other two! Also concerned were **The Organ Grinders**, **Keith Hennessey**, **MOM** and a coupla DJs. November stopped in its tracks. *Someone* rented "porno" videos showcasing uncut penises. It was funny watching people try to carry on conversations in the front room; trying to look nonchalant as the tv buckled with flesh. Keith tore himself away from the tv long enough to perform an hour-long piece incorporating **Saliva** and newer work--his wrenching one-man insights into incest, sorrow, shame and the glory of breaking through it. People thought it was real blood. Keith will be performing an updated version in your neighborhood soon. **Jess Grant** made a guest appearance, reflecting on how circumcision can make a man feel like half a man. Organ grinders depend on their monkeys, and this group monkeyed around independently for 40 minutes, creating a fusion of rock and science fiction. **MOM** closed the night, pink weenies were flashed, the message blasted out through the world: More skin is better! Just before Thanksgiving, we did a benefit for **Food Not Bombs**, the group dedicated to feeding the thousands of hungry people left out on the streets. Even after numerous arrests for disregarding permits and procedure, FNB has not been stopped. Contributing to their efforts through musical means were **Penelope Houston and Band**, whose music is always a pleasure to experience. Penelope projects a real strength, even when doing the most sensitive songs. The post-punk trio, **Squelch**, did an aggressive set of "intellegent thrash", while **Dogtalk** brought us their own brand of R&B. **Cha'tima** got the show off to a high energy start with a funky back-beat and thumping bass by **Kay** (hurray for women bass players!)

At the cafe on Nov. 29, we were treated to a rare, in-person, appearance by Komotion cartoonist **Tom Powell** (aka Thoreau Spinoza Pushkin.) Out here from Albuquerque, Tom presented a slide show on the "Sculpture in Public Spaces" project at the University of New Mexico. His commentary was part information and part performance piece, as he told of the controversy surrounding some of the pieces. For instance, his piece in the show, **American Splendor**, was carefully placed in front of the Anthropology Dept. The huge "totem" made of old washing machines and car door "wings" got some Anthropologists upset,

however... I guess some people just can't take a joke! (Or a bit of cultural ridicule...)

On the same night, **Joseph Brinckmann** performed some new songs, singing and playing accordion, accompanied by **Bonnie Kirkpatrick** on cello and **Claude Palmer** on oud. The unusual instrumentation, along with Brinckmann's Lennon-esque vocals, produced an engrossingly dark, Brechtian mood. Later, performance/poet **Wendy O**, read from a position that looked like a sprinter about to leap out of the starting blocks. Her raw, rapid-fire tales of urban survival relate an experience that all of us outcast, downcast, city refugees can relate to...

Some nights take odd turns. At the last minute, we couldn't get a print of "Sugarcane Alley" and were only able to show the video. Few people were in evidence that Dec. 2. Rain? **Lewis Jordan** and **Q.R. Hand** launched into a poetry/music set, and as the stuff heated up, the people started to show! With the two live blokes on the stage and the film being great even on video, by the time **FUZZ FACTOR** hit the one, it was all worth it. The factor has been working steadily for months and are getting to that finely-tuned place where every show they do is a rhythmic event of radical splendor. Check out the electric marimba scene, this is the cutting edge!



FILM SUGARCANE ALLEY

POETRY Q.R. Hand
with Lewis Jordan
on sax

MUSIC FUZZ FACTOR

D J KAYUMANGI

\$4.

Sat. Dec. 2

8:30 pm

2779 SIXTEENTH ST. SAN FRANCISCO

CANTOAMERICA



On Dec. 9 we held an **Emergency Benefit for El Salvador**. Only weeks before, the right-wing had gone on a vengeful rampage, killing Jesuit priests and thrusting the government's atrocities on the front pages of American newspapers. Opposition groups immediately responded with protests and held benefits to publicize what was really happening. At this special show, two excellent Latin groups performed in solidarity. **Markahuasi** opened the show with Peruvian, folkloric songs. This wonderful music uses flute-like pan

pipes, charanga, percussion and lots of singing. **Cantoamerica**, from Costa Rica, combined modern Latin beats to create an original sound, with excellent flute playing, keyboards, guitar and vocal harmonies. Speaker **Ana Perla**, of the Salvadoran woman's group, **I.M.U.**, also gave a first hand account of the recent events.

A long list of talented people performed at the **3rd Annual Komotion Holiday Party**. Among them was **Tyehimbe** a fine man with dreadlocks past his shoulders and a style to kill--deft on his toes and energy with edge--sexy!! Danzed and danzed, burned holes in the stage, street funk to a piece by the Beat Nigs, and followed that by a tap piece to a compilation of rap and soul. **Claude Palmer** played oud (arabic stringed instrument,) accompanied by **Bill Quinn** on percussion--a steamy middle-eastern mood. Youngster **Sarah Brinckmann** improvised a balletic whirl of modern moves--dips, leaps and cartwheels to a modern rock beat. **Celeste Connor** created a very cool mood with her poetic piece "Blue Light," written and performed to music and vocal experimentations by Bruce Manning (from Tooth and Nail.) **Robin Banks**, closet flute prodigy, dusted off the instrument and performed a rendition of *Syrinx*, a piece for solo flute by Debussy, adding a little "cave reverb"... **Mat Callahan**, of the Looters, on the other end of the classics, sang and accompanied himself on guitar in his strong, straight forward, no shit style--songs by Jimi Hendrix and Tom Waits among others. Navajo, **Tony Vigil**, a very special guest that night, held us in another world with his original playing on the traditional Navajo flute. **Joseph Brinckmann** performed solo, always a strong presence and original style. There was also a special book release of *It*, poetry by **Warner Martin** (of Tooth and Nail,) with him reading excerpts from this metaphysical unpretension... lots of good humor, insight and love. What a night!

Last in '89, the **Renegades of Funk** presided over the **New Years 70's Party**. A John Travolta look-alike contest produced no winners. **Arnold L.Z.** led the band through hits of the 70's (a wild reading of "Get Down Tonight!") and the party got off. **Vince Shelley** sat in for "Funky Town," which was revealed to be Panama City, still reeling from "Operation Just Cause." The year/night ended with a lot of discarded platform boots in the trash. Renegades of Funk funk'd on and the brass in Washington D.C. and Langley, Va. started dreaming about Cuba and Nicaragua...Thanx Renegades for takin' it to the 90's and thanx **VERONICA LIVE** for redefining the vocabulary of the decade in her own rad DJ way!

About this time Komotion participated in **ATA's, The Hidden Apparatus is At Us** show. (That's **Artists' Television Access**.) Based on a showing of over 100 artists, the show is a perspective on the current "War on Drugs" trend that is circling about the media like a vulture, looking for some victims and believers. War on

drugs? An attempt by a very smug, war-based corporate complex to maintain a military identity in the face of onrushing peace in global relations... while smaller powers crush rebellions of sticks and stones with tanks and helicopters, large nations extend their hegemony in times of "peace" by controlling the economies of their neighbors. No? While some strong nations open up to the needs of their internal cultures, other ideologies crush dissent and fight the gradual erosion of their chokehold. "Democratic" nations like the USA transfer military concepts to "new" wars, ignoring their own consumptive consumeristic habits--they seek to punish the ones who work the land! Drug money gets funneled into private armies like arms profits... The Hidden Apparatus is at us! People who helped...

Esmeralda sang some ballads and originals accompanied only by guitar. **Dave Lippman** cracked up the house with **George Shrub**, his alter-ego from the **Committee to Intervene Anywhere**. The **Yeastie Girlz** jammed up on stage to fructify and rap on body functions & modern lovesex...they do it in their nasty world of truth. **Stick Against Stone**--a different take on reggae, toasting, hop-hip and funky beats. The honors for finishing off the night belonged to **UAF**, cousins of the **BEATNIGS**. **UAF** moved sampled beats and voices against sax and drums live, an urgent cry to the outer world from the inside: Stop killin' us for your wealth security... **UAF** kept playin' and playin'--it

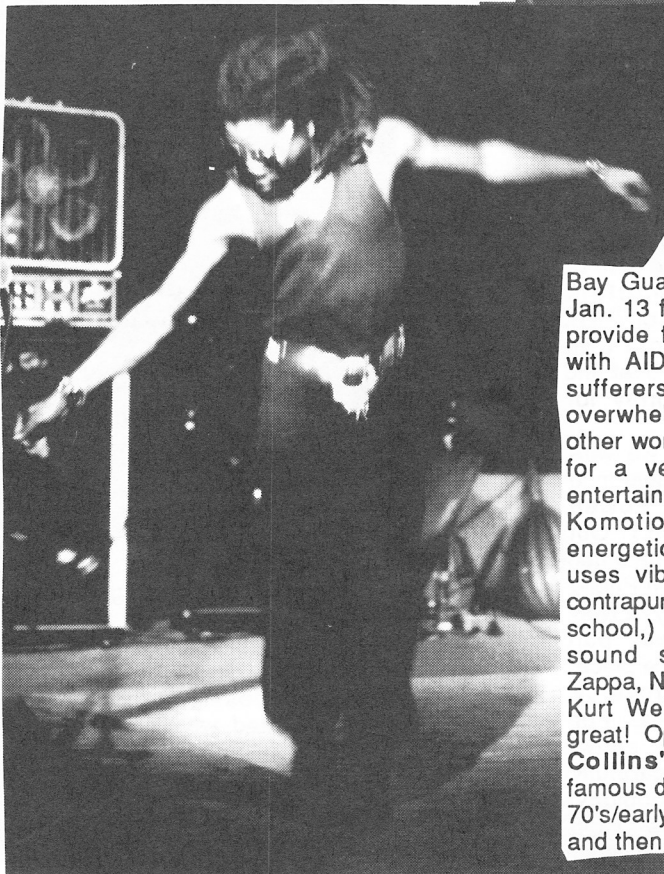
would have gone on forever if they hadn't stopped to rehydrate. Thanx to the artists and workers for the special contributions to this night.

For those with the fortitude to read this far, rest assured that the end is near. As of writing, a wild party rocks in the background of this little Komotion studio. The headline band's truck broke down. Four other bands are playing instead. It's **St. Paddy's Day** and soon we go to press. Up the street the **LOOTERS** are playing with **WORLD ENTERTAINMENT WAR**. The Mission is growing and expanding, music is humming and touching the lives of everyone...

MONDAY JUNE 11



TYEHIMBE



1990! Staff members of the Bay Guardian organized a benefit on Jan. 13 for **Project Open Hand**, who provide food and services for people with AIDS, the homeless and quake sufferers. Their efforts created an overwhelming outpour of support (in other words, they raised lots of *dinero*) for a very worthy cause. Musical entertainment was provided by one of Komotion's own--**Eskimo**, a wild, energetic, and quirky ensemble that uses vibes (the metal kind,) lots of contrapuntal lines (see, I *did* go to music school,) and weird vocals to create a sound somewhere between Frank Zappa, New York lounge-lizard jazz, and Kurt Weill--I think... Anyway, they're great! Opening the show was **The Paul Collins' Beat**, who originally got famous during the New Wave of the late 70's/early 80's. They surface every now and then and still sound pretty good!

Hours of Lonely Music

A girl flew past on the ferris wheel screaming
followed by legions of kids
plastered with cotton candy
I took my boy to the museum
where my roommate showed his films

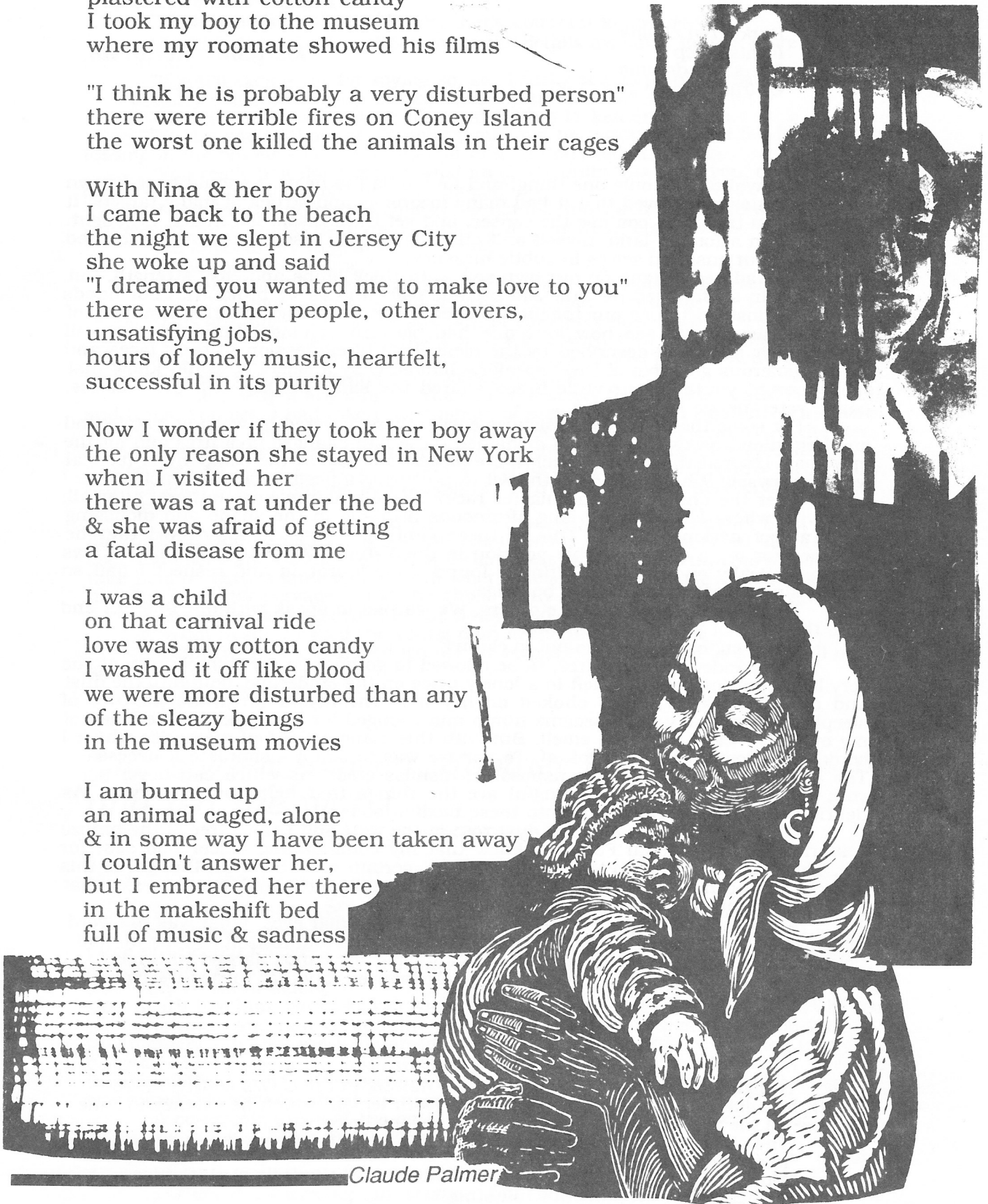
"I think he is probably a very disturbed person"
there were terrible fires on Coney Island
the worst one killed the animals in their cages

With Nina & her boy
I came back to the beach
the night we slept in Jersey City
she woke up and said
"I dreamed you wanted me to make love to you"
there were other people, other lovers,
unsatisfying jobs,
hours of lonely music, heartfelt,
successful in its purity

Now I wonder if they took her boy away
the only reason she stayed in New York
when I visited her
there was a rat under the bed
& she was afraid of getting
a fatal disease from me

I was a child
on that carnival ride
love was my cotton candy
I washed it off like blood
we were more disturbed than any
of the sleazy beings
in the museum movies

I am burned up
an animal caged, alone
& in some way I have been taken away
I couldn't answer her,
but I embraced her there
in the makeshift bed
full of music & sadness



Claude Palmer

Evening Star

*Barking in chains
In his sleep
The slave dreams
Of true death.*

Margaret McDuffie

Betrayal means only one thing, and its aim is the heart. I should have known this, but instead I believed that it had many meanings and struck at many targets. It could disarm the body, confuse the senses, and yet leave resolution intact, I thought. Powerless, in a foreign land, myself and others adopted these notions as we learned to dole out our enslaved selves in subtle measures.

We had been titans on our own soil, with thick limbs and easy strength, but here the thin air fatigued us, our skin became pale, and as we broke with our hands and began instead to use our tongues to speak, our minds became the easy prey of favor. It was easy to see how long one had been in bondage. Initiates were still strong, their identities described by the clear lines of expression in their faces and by the generous gestures of their speaking hands. Only a scientist would know that the imported youth of our virile breed shared the same origins with the faceless, politic veterans we had become.

For some the metamorphosis was easy, others wavered between one state and another; silent, awkward, angry. I disdained these half-changed creatures and for the most part ignored them. How much more pleasant it was in the company of tactical wits like myself! Who would deny the wit in procuring a position at the beach where I looked after the children of the master race? These children have fathers, after all; men with whom I later spent long afternoons drinking in the shade and discussing the state of national affairs. One of these gentlemen was so impressed that he obtained for me a very favorable position in the National Armed Forces, and it was there, ironically enough, that I finally found the admiration and respect I had so craved since my first moment in bondage.

There were a few fortunate others. We learned to speak with our tongues and rode the wave of prodigal distinction.

But then, one day, I was put in chains.

I demanded to be set free, to be allowed to go back to my own country at the very least, but instead I was left in a lonely place on the landscape, bound to the dust and clay. For three days I choked on dry heat through a torturous mixture of sleepless dreams. My body became numb and I longed for the sweet, fertile smell of my own soil. Even just that smell. But with this came a flood of memories which I could not allow myself to think of. To survive was to adapt - simulate if necessary. The content of the mind is transposable; dismiss emotions which can never serve you; the things that are meaningful are the things that help you to survive. As delirium set in I moved further into these meditations.

On the fifth day, a cloud of dust rose in the west and I saw three of the bronze uniforms of the National Forces. I knew that my commanding officer had sent for me. They had done this to test me, then. I felt certain of it. Strange, though, is this distinct feeling now when I recall it, that in that moment I lay beneath a sky that seemed to want to crush me. I could not breathe.

As the soldiers approached I searched their familiar eyes. What was the word for laugh? I could not remember. They untied my hands and feet, pulled me up and poured water down my throat. As I choked and spat my hands danced with relief. 'Laugh, you fools!' my fingers cried. One soldier winced, another turned westward and led the march.

Twilight was cooling the air as I stood waiting in the C.O.'s courtyard. At length he appeared carrying a glass of water with lemon, which he extended to me. He greeted me and his eyes passed quickly over my body; very quickly.

"The shadow of vigor -" he began.

"Is an ugly thing," I replied.

"More so than any wound or -"

"Treachery, or even death's full sting."

He chuckled. "Mine, you know," he said, meaning the poem.

"Yes, they told me so."

We remained silent for a while. I drank slowly, savoring the quiet slip of water in my throat while my limbs shivered and stung with old sweat. The officer was standing beside me now, murmuring to himself and regarding the evening's first star as if he shared some special confidence with it.

"The Forces are going to seize your country," he said, his eyes fixed above. "The plan for attack is infallible."

"There's nothing to attack, sir; that's common knowledge."

He turned and smiled. "I can make the details available to you. More than that, in fact."

"If you'll excuse me for saying so, sir, I really see no point in making an attack on a country which is already entirely under your control."

"Your status could change," he said, with a locked expression.

What a poet! I thought. Treachery may not be very ugly, but it felt like sin hissing in my bowels - even the thought of it. "I don't like it," I said.

"You really just don't realize what an opportunity this is for you, do you? For all of us! You're going to cut off your own hands."

No: I felt the itch of ridicule in my hands, and I ached for him to know that expression, for it would have made him recoil - nothing else could.

"An opportunity to gain what?" I spat.

"Why, more, of course."

"More of this?" I demanded, holding my pale arms out in the semi-darkness.

"That," he said solemnly, unperturbed, "is your own doing."

"This was once part of the strength of your precious army."

"Yes, indeed it was." He landed on his last word with well practised meaning. There was nothing more to say; he did not even look at me, just walked away. Now it was I who regarded the evening star, baffled by guilt.

Could I deny it any longer? The couch of safety had become a seat full of coils and traps. You see, I had taken the cushion of prejudice and sat upon it. Wit, charm, loyalty, knowing when to laugh and when to show shame - they comprised the zone of indifference between myself and the humiliation of my slavery (for even in the Forces one was still a slave). Resourceful, yes! As any coward is. Proud? Incorrigibly. But the good pride given me by my origins I sold for false pride here in this land of illusions.

So tired now, I thought, and stood further back in the darkness so that I could see the stars. The illusions of favor dispersed like a cloud, cool and silent around me. But beyond that there were no instruments of power to take hold of. Only a large empty vault where the air was still. Like a room without mirrors, certainty pervaded, and the ghost of my former self watched silent.

The officer had returned to the house and sent out an escort.

"What next?" I asked the young man in the uniform.

"Supper," he replied, and led me off across the compound to a pen full of slaves.

*One soldier winced, another turned westward
and led the march.*

Darkness was thick by the time soldiers came and brought water and roots for us. The water was sour, the roots black with rot. As the cold settled in, I sat with a piece of uneaten mockery at my feet. There was dry heaving behind me. I looked around and as I watched a man's grey shoulders convulse I realized I was no longer safe; only restraint defended me, and even so, perhaps I was already on the brink of a slow death like him. He looked at me and scowled. We were a race who had chosen luck over faith, and now we couldn't even stand to look at one another, and yet at this moment the distance between us was closing rapidly. Others watched in my direction. I was one of the healthy ones, they were thinking, so why wasn't I helping that man? But I was healthy because I was afraid. And he was unhealthy because he was afraid. We were all afraid, all numb.

A commotion rose at the gate. Two soldiers swept the pen with blinding lights and stopped when my shadow buried the sick man behind me. As they dragged me through the small crowd to the gate, watching eyes grew calm. "Savor it," I said. "this is all that's left of satisfaction."

For one day I was kept in isolation, but then they had me out again, this time

as guinea pig. As I was examined and tested, I noticed that gradually the sky was disappearing from view, and the outside world becoming a doubtful memory. The merging hours were like a dream in which nothing is familiar but everything makes a compelling kind of sense. It was with this tenuous resolve in my mind that I was led, at last, to a huge underground room from which there were no exits.

The walls and floor of this chamber were of rough brown earth. From the walls, water trickled down and collected in a pool in the center of the floor, and on a ledge above this pool, strange men I'd never seen nor heard of stood in long robes, conferring. It was only a few - a very powerful few. I understood. A moment's pause, and I would be ritually disposed of like many others before me. With the rough earth between my toes and the smell of old water in my nostrils I felt a delicious fear flooding me up.

A robe was put over me, and now I was led along broken dirt paths to one of the many ledges above the pool. As I shuffled along I felt a pair of eyes upon me. Another soul was being held across the room, and she sent a cry across the silence. I looked up and held her eyes and suddenly the yearning to be beside her

overwhelmed me. She raised her hands and sent cries into my heart that descended straight and fast to the vault where I had left a ghost of myself only days before. There they echoed like the sirens of Homer - higher, higher, till there was no sound, no air.

A heavy hand fell on my shoulder and words muttered in reverence echoed through me and pattered over the walls. As they faded, the hand pushed me to my knees. I resisted without hope - with great relief. She who first called to me looked up again just as an enormous arm clutched her throat. We looked deep into each other's hearts, and when the axe fell, I did not feel it.



TAKE THAT!

© 1989 WINSTON SMITH

German artist **Albina** and her work.

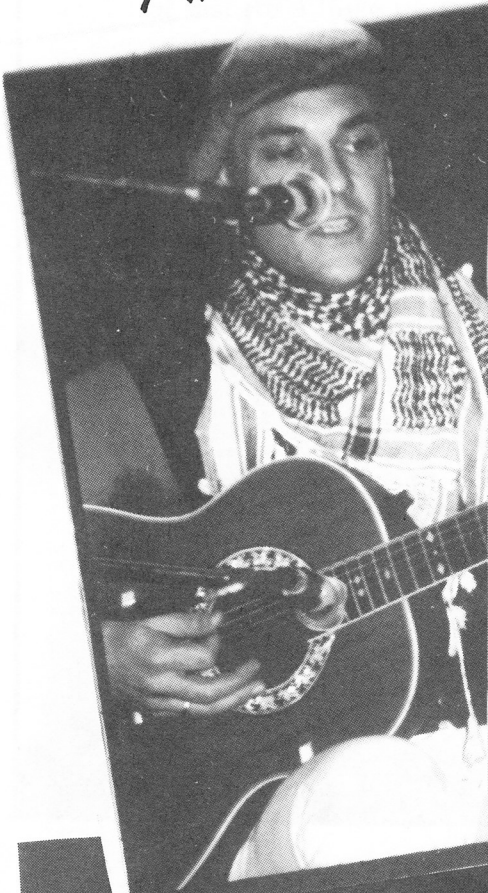


THE GREEN AND RED HOLIDAY SHOW

Relationship to nature was the common theme of this solstice exhibit by six women artists. While the group represented a diversity of expression, the show contrasted views of alienation from the natural world, in work such as British sculptor **Kim Maguire's** wall pieces made of recycled materials gathered on Mission streets, to **Sasha Pepper's** paintings of figures in relationship to the natural world to **Alana Jelinek's** large spirals reflecting our inner connection to the oneness of all things. Work by **Jennifer Lane**, **Judith Shaw**, and **Teresa Cammozzi** were included.

The Search, painting by **Sasha Pepper**

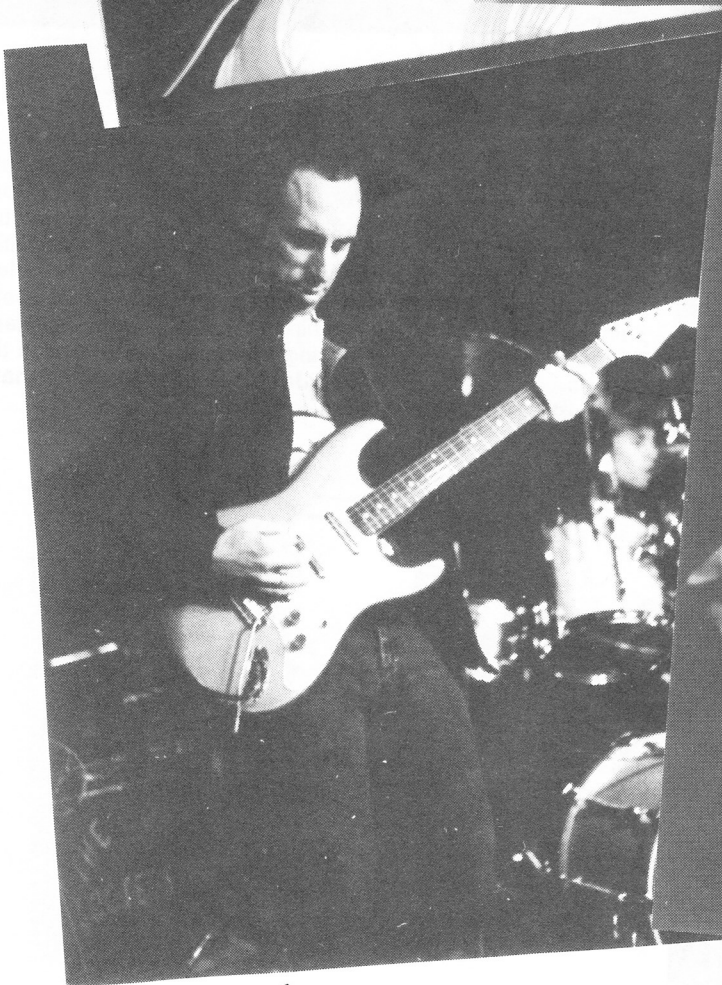
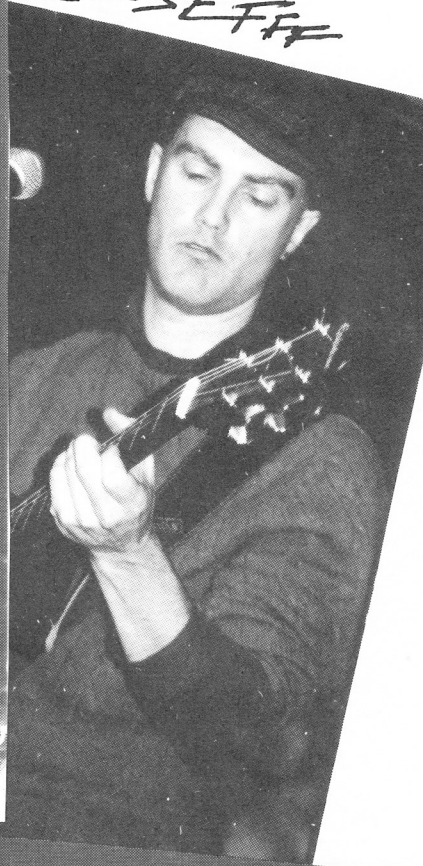
MATTHE



VALEREE



JOSEFF



JOE



LISA

The **Looters** played a great show here at the end of January. It seemed like years since some of us have seen and heard 'em. And man, they aren't waiting around for the world to catch up to what they did a year ago! There were old favorites and hits, but the new material is what is the most exciting. Using the new sound system and bright video lights, we heard songs with acoustic guitar and voices, stripped down to basic emotion, the harmonies all the more deep. New songs with more rock beats, better than the radio, jack! I like "Under a Blue Concrete Sky" and "Pavement of Bone." The Looters definitely sing about what they see, but also what lies under and beyond the realities of street and sky.

SNAKEWALK played their debut gig for the opening set, a much-awaited performance. Recently they finished the first tape, recorded at Komotion. **Robin Banks** sang songs of the *female* centered world, (from mythological medievalisms to modern socio-sexual go-go raps,) "hit things that were plugged in," and proved she still has a few moves... **Joe Gore** brought half his guitar collection down and lived up to his rep as the master of undefinable worldbeat mofo rhythm/lead *chunk* guitar. He glued it all together, aided and abetted by **Brain** from the Limbomaniacs and **Shido** from **Ogie Yocha** on drums and bass, respectively. **Shannon Callahan** added just the right touches on backup vocals and keyboards. We want Snakewalk back soon. That's a monster version of "It's Alright, Ma."

This unforgettable evening closed with a group jam & invited special guests. Like **Vince Shelley** singing "Enjoy Yourself." (Vince fled from Paris after crushing his ballet teacher's toes in a *pas de deux* that went bad.) Other guests included **Joseph Brinckmann** on accordion, Shannon singing "Message to Rudy" and a rousing version of "Armageddeon Time." It ended with a packed stage of singers and players and dancers. That's the spirit that started the whole damn thing back in the warehouses and basements!

The last **Open House**/open mike of the year transpired on Wednesday, Jan. 31. Surprise guests **The Bronx**, an improv comedy group from the East Bay took the audience through suggested madness and mania. **Celeste** filled the space with her rich-toned singing debut. The power of acapella drama! "Summertime" and "Willow Weep For Me." A guy named **"Pliny"** from *Ore-gone* had much socio-political rhythm, rhyme and reason to catch your brain and spin it around--quick on his tongue and wit, he tears it down with "pleny" wit! **Ricardo Anderson** & fab accompanist (any clues?) doing serious, surreal, emotional/poetic myth

ROBIN



SHIDO



imagery to a beat--something to hear while you danz! **Valerie** sang and played her guitar, gutsy and tough, gets down to it! She held the audience transfixed, while **Lars Jensen** sang his songs and played mandolin; a quieter mood to leave with. And so, dear reader, we go to the show at Komo, it's **Cameltoe**, I can hear 'em jammin' on stage...bye!!!



Greg Rover

Art Review: Power and Violence at a Day Treatment Center Known as the World

Margot Pepper

"Severely Emotionally Disturbed" is the label stigmatizing the children at a day treatment center where painter Richard Olsen taught and counseled for three years. His most recent show at Project Artaud's Southern Exposure Gallery succeeds in the ambitious task of candidly documenting this disturbing experience. The series of paintings is entitled *Power and Violence at a Day Treatment Center--Power*, in the artist's own words,

"...because those who possess it have not only labeled these kids, "S.E.D.," but on that basis have sent them into a world where they have no rights. Violence, because once entering that world, a systematic attack is made on their beings, the purpose of which is to change them into beings those in power desire."

The impact of this unsettling and moving exhibit is not drawn simply from its ability to dissect the public institutions that have been set up to process children labeled as S.E.D. into profitable commodities, it is derived from its ability to explode the view of such an institution into one that mirrors the societies in which we live. As the artist himself states:

"If the viewer recognizes his or her own reality through some of the images, it is no coincidence. Through the particularity of Day Treatment, a universal of power and violence resides. A power and violence that engulfs us all."

Olsen innovates fatigued and abused modern art techniques by infusing them with new meaning. As a good story teller and teacher, he delivers his messages with broad, clear, deliberate strokes. With a largely black and white pallet, Olsen provides clarity and heightens irony by exploring relationships such as juxtapositions, opposites, comparison-contrast, and before-and-after. Images are reduced to their minimum, symbolic form. The overall effect is to elevate the specific to the general; the individual child on the canvas becomes an embodiment of a common experience.

Thus we have paintings such as *Transformation*, a modern triptych reminiscent of the assimilation process expected of more than just SED children. In the first panel the dark silhouette of an outcast figure kneels alone in sterile white space. In the second panel he is immersed in a maze, the maze of hurdles designed to mold him into a contributing component of mainstream society. In the third panel, an inversion of colors creates the irony as he emerges: an archetypal white man--in utter darkness.

In keeping with the limitations of the Behaviorist theories prevalent in our "educational" institutions, what happens to the individual in his journey through this maze of rewards and punishments seems to be irrelevant, so long as he becomes a functional component of society.

Look Ma, No More Anger shows a child beaming with joy--never mind that a quarter of his brain

has been removed. Although not a representation of a lobotomy, the painting alludes to a process which amounts to about the same ends: the removal of rebellious elements in a personality such as anger or pain. It is a Machiavellian equation, and the tax payers, any conscientious educator will complain, are in accord. The tendency is to fixate on test scores and statistics, which often mask the underlying problems and obscure the solutions.

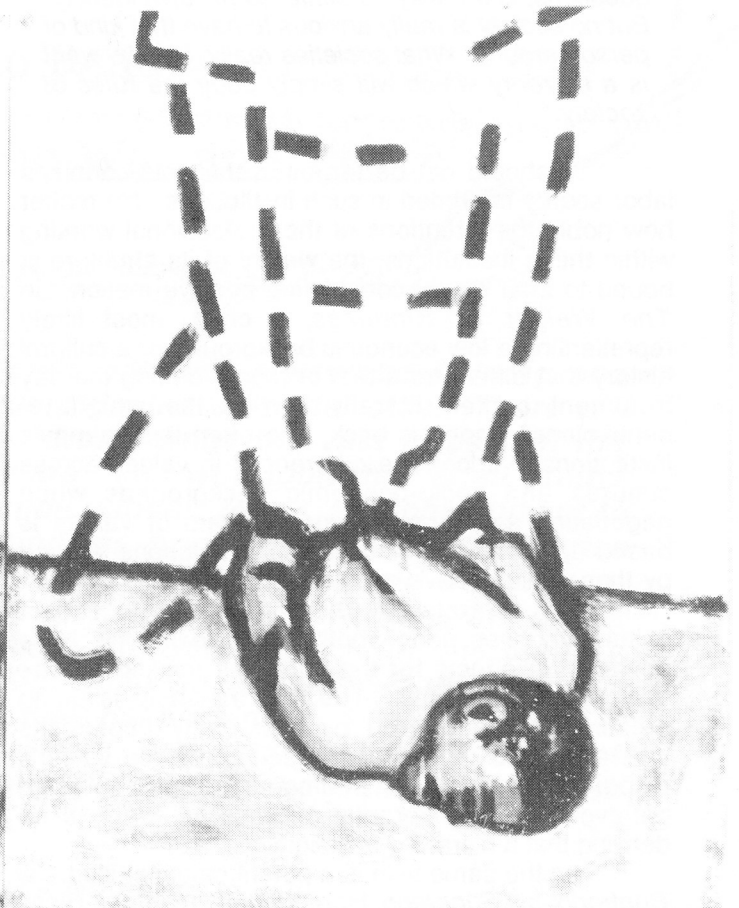
Olsen reminds us of the absurdities behind quotas in another triptych full of black humor, *New Quota, (More Money From Medi-Cal.)* In the first frame a child seems content eating his prescription drugs that appear like candy buttons on a ream of wax paper. The quota reads 1/3. By the third frame the quota has improved dramatically (3/3) as more Medi-Cal money is spent on drugs to help children; the child in the frame smiles as if to say he has become whole. Actually it is the day treatment center that smiles; the more drugs that are prescribed, the more "clinical" the center appears, and the more money it will receive.

This scenario is reminiscent of our recent hysteria regarding the "War on Drugs," which in lower working class neighborhoods is more aptly named "Drug Warfare:" the more drugs that are imported into the lower class communities and ghettos, the more powerless its users become, and the more money those in control receive.

Not all children, however, will be as fortunate as those bearing the drug-induced smiles of success. One of the most straightforward paintings in the exhibit, *Descent into Hell*, traces the fall of the individual who, by rejecting the values of a given institution, is forced into isolation. According to this painting, defiance in a day treatment center is remedied by isolated rows of seats, discouraging interaction and fostering competition. What lies at the bottom of this *Descent into Hell* is the scream issuing from the child's mouth: the "Time Out Room," with one very solitary seat on the fringe of society. On this fringe one will also find the homeless, the immigrant, the "minority," the "Communist," the anarchic "terrorist," the lower-class subhumanoid--depending upon the particular preferences of the party hosting the fund-raiser, and the phobias of those attending.

This image of the marginal individual sheds new meaning on the term "choice," as illustrated in a piece called *The Given Choice*. There are two options available to the individual, which if looked at closely are really only one. Either the individual strives towards the power culture's definition of "excellence," as suggested by the solid gold color of the left panel, or "OR," the two sterile white letters on the right panel looming from a black void as if to dare the individual to look beyond them at the option behind door number two.

The children in any given "educational" factory know well the meaning of OR. OR refers to the *Descent into Hell*. For many of us OR has come to represent the dozens of people we must pass each day with outstretched hands who were once like the



majority of the people in the United States--just a couple of pay checks away from the streets.

As Olsen has warned us, the nature of the power depicted in the exhibit is frightening because it goes beyond the physical. It is also highly psychological in nature, and therefore insidiously difficult to detect in our society.

Repression, the Ultimate Cure depicts an archetypal human being with an armor of spikes protruding all over his body. The spikes represent the less desirable manifestations of personality such as anger, which the person in the painting freely expresses. But society does not allow for expressions of this sort of emotion. Such potentially aggressive traits might prove harmful to a given institution; an abused child might turn his unrepressed anger against the staff, an oppressed individual might turn on the guards of the governing power structure. Yet when emotions have no outlet, they often turn inward. From an institution's point of view this phenomenon constitutes the *Ultimate Cure*: deflecting all hostility back to the source, ideally, before it is ever released. Thus the second half of the painting: an archetypal person with the same spikes turned inward upon himself.

External Control, Internal Control illustrates one of the many ways in which the *Ultimate Cure* might be achieved. In the "before" side of the painting the individual lies sprawled on the ground, held there by the force of an authority figure. In the "after" side of the painting the imposing figure is no longer present, his echo suffices to keep the subject in the same stance of defeat, for the voice of authority has been internalized. The individual can now be trusted, say, to vote for the party that is not in his interest without having a gun held to his head.

It is generally assumed that wherever power is being misused someone is in control. *Transference Countertransference* suggests this is not necessarily true, a fact with even more frightening implications. In the first half of the painting a child is being controlled by a counselor whose face is covered by a large grey circle, a screen onto which the child may transfer all his emotional baggage. Yet in the second half we see the counselor transferring onto the grey faceless screen of the child. This makes the counselor's use of power much more sinister, for it is implied that the motivation for its use is rooted in the irrational or subconscious. As Alice Miller points out in *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, it is more than likely that the analyst's own need to resolve defeats in early childhood power conflicts has driven him to a field where he "exercises the same sort of unconscious manipulation (on his patient) as that to which he was exposed as a child."

One has only to pick up Ronald Reagan's autobiography to be convinced that analysts are not the only power figures who re-enact their childhood dramas with the aid of an unwitting population.

Does this imply that anyone who is involved in our public educational institutions is either unconsciously inept or deliberately evil? Certainly not. The field has attracted some of this society's finest individuals (including Richard Olsen.)

Yet we must not forget that each educational institution is part of a much larger power structure in whose interest it is to maintain a certain state of affairs. In the words of James Baldwin, (*A Talk to Teachers*.)

"The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions...To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those

questions, is the way he achieves his own identity. But no society is really anxious to have that kind of person around. What societies really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society."

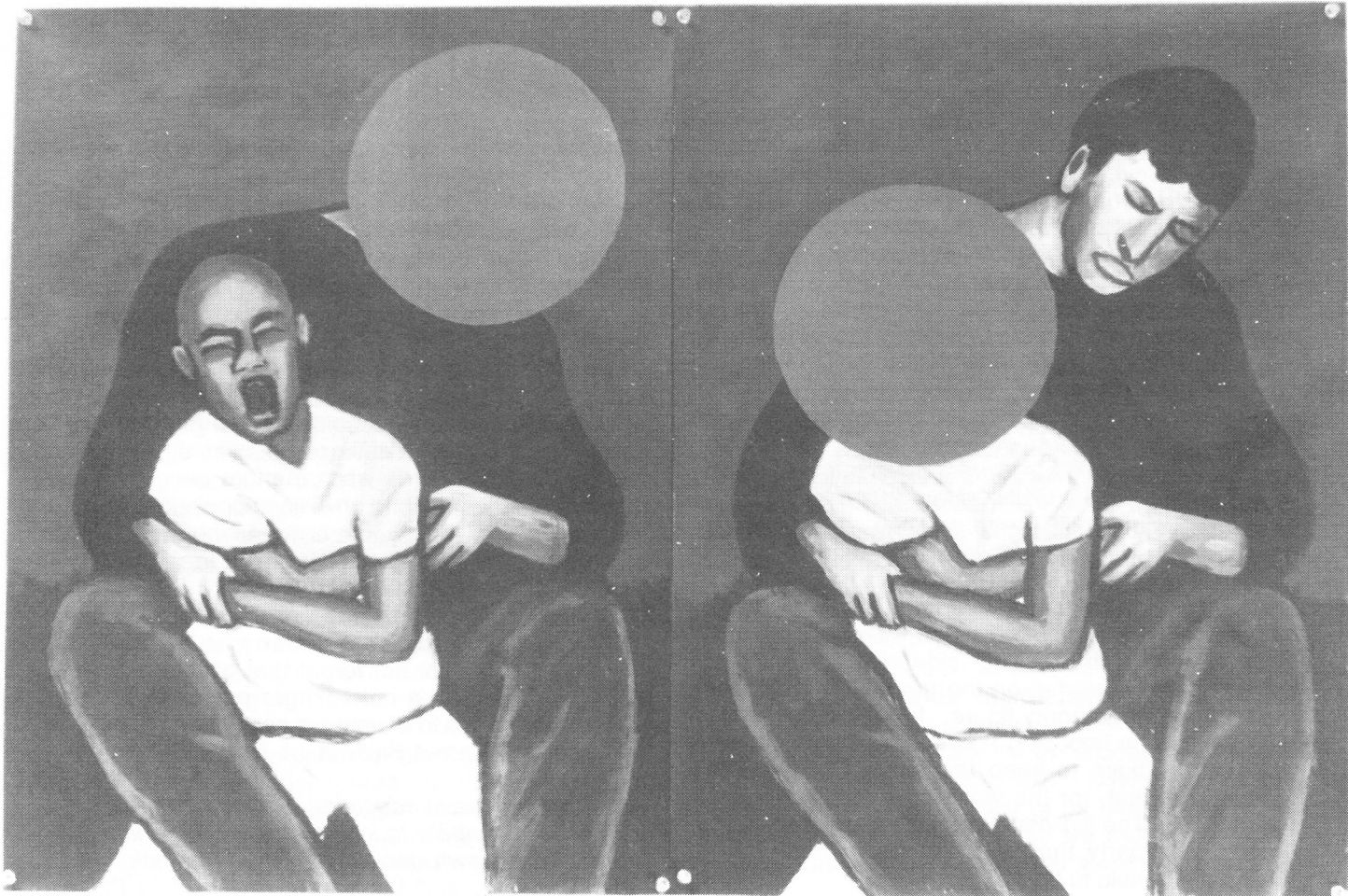
It should not be forgotten that this country's labor source is primed in such institutions. No matter how noble the intentions of the professional working within these institutions, the weight of its structure is bound to bear down, constricting positive motion. In *The Weight of Kindness*, a child, most likely representing a low economic background or a cultural history that differs from that of those running the day treatment center, literally carries the weight of benevolence upon his back. Too often this country's institutions overlook the differences in values across cultures and socio-economic backgrounds when negotiating solutions. When a system of values is based upon the power culture, the solutions defined by those values have a limited scope of applications. History will reiterate that the solutions the dominant culture imposes upon another culture usually have devastating effects for the latter, as implied in *The Weight of Kindness*. The fact that help is being prescribed and offered by one entity implies its inherent power. Whether the self-appointed savior's disposition be condescending under the guise of benevolence, or flagrantly oppressive, there is no denying that a hierarchy is maintained.

In the same vein is a potent painting titled *Cal Confronts his Superego*. Here the tiny head of a Black child sticks out a defiant tongue at his superego, or "conscience:" the monstrous visage of a White man. The child represents resistance, defiance, and if it is

small it is only in respect to the tremendous power structure against which it rebels. The man, although not necessarily ominous in appearance, represents a specific set of arbitrary values that has been used in this country since the turn of the century as a measuring stick of success and failure. It is no coincidence that so many of the children who are labeled "Severely Emotionally Disturbed" or "Learning Impaired" are children of working class backgrounds and cultural backgrounds different from that of the dominant power culture. Such misassigned labels and standards reinforce guilt and self-hatred among those who fail to meet them, aspiring instead to their own equally legitimate sets of values.

Olsen allows one of these students to speak directly to the audience with a tragic self-portrait, a self-portrait that speaks not of a smiling child taking off on a runway of endless tomorrows, but of an ugly bloated monster, baring his teeth and looking out at us through sad swollen eyes.

That society undermines the personal needs and self-esteem of its citizenry in order to control it is by no means the only problem plaguing public educational institutions. Yet like the deadly AIDS virus, the problem drastically reduces the chances for growth within these institutions. For change to assume any meaning, a dialectic process of reform must take place simultaneously within society and within its institutions. This is why it is so essential to have such powerful artists as Richard Olsen that serve as synapses between the two, between systems and people, between those abusing power and those capable of expropriating it. Were this fact not true our watch dog Jesse Helms would have nothing to fear, and nothing to censor.



Books to Read:

Comparing Lanark and War and Peace

Creatures shall be seen on the earth who will always be fighting one another, with the great losses and frequent deaths on either side. There will be no bounds to their malice; by their strong limbs the vast forests of the world shall be laid low; and when they are filled with food they shall gratify their desires by dealing out death, affliction, labour, terror, and banishment to every living thing; and from their boundless pride they will desire to rise towards heaven, but the excessive weight of their limbs will hold them down. Nothing shall remain on the earth or under the earth or in the waters that shall not be pursued, disturbed, or spoiled, and that which is in one country removed into another. And their bodies shall be made the tomb and the means of transit of all the living bodies they have slain.

O earth, why do you not open and hurl them into the deep fissures of thy vast abysses and caverns, and no longer display in the sight of heaven so cruel and horrible a monster?

--From Leonardo da Vinci's Notebooks

This quote sets the stage for **LANARK**, a book set in modern Scotland and in a sort of parallel universe that both mirrors and contains earth history. It's a great book in many ways but what prompted me to bring it to your attention was how successfully and comprehensively it typifies perspectives and attitudes today.

Lanark is a man without purpose, without a knowledge of his own, or any other history. The only contrast to an all absorbing alienation is a fascination with the increasingly scarce sunlight in the city of Unthank. In fact, he is obsessed with the dawn. Beginning almost as allegorical science fiction full of unreal extremes and sometimes too-obvious metaphors, the story evolves into the telling of Lanark's history through the voice of an oracle. He was, in another manifestation, Duncan Thaw, neurotic young Glasgovan aspiring to be an artist.

Thaw grapples with adolescence, sex, atheism/religion, socialism and art school as he wends his way through what is ultimately a very ordinary life in the post WWII modern world. Ordinarity is, in fact, one of the crucial subtexts that makes this work so important. Not simply because it gives it universality--a characteristic of all good art--rather, because it is the "ordinariness" most people feel that clashes so violently with the apparently extraordinary events within which our lives take place.

This brings me to **WAR AND PEACE**, perhaps the quintessential novel of the 19th century. Published a hundred years before **Lanark**, it similarly contains not only a wonderful story, vast panorama and profound insight, but it, too, typifies the strivings,

aspirations, the perspectives and attitudes of its time. The differences and similarities between the two books are worthy of comparison.

The titles themselves suggest this. War and peace were the two states in which human society (at least in Europe) alternately existed, and frequently leapt between, throughout its history. They were the context and they were the engines of social development. Lanark is the enigmatic name of an enigma--the individual cast adrift in a world without even the boundaries of war and peace to define it. No faith, little luck in love and only the state and the opposite sex to act as objective counterweights to a subjective being.

While Tolstoy grappled with science and religion, revolution and oppression, freedom and necessity--in short, the gamut of social concerns with the stated purpose of solving humanity's problems--Gray (Lanark's author) presents a quandary. Lanark/Thaw is ripped apart by conflicting ideologies and points of view, none of which are what they claim to be but are something else: deceiving and alluring and sinister. Gray's characters are not even pursuing all-encompassing solutions, they're struggling to escape them and their practical manifestations in institutions, authorities, hypocritical relationships and human-made catastrophes. (The apocalypse in **Lanark** is, of course, a product of industrial self-destruction.) In a sense, **War and Peace** is pre-marxism and **Lanark** is post-marxism.

Tolstoy brilliantly captures the class-conflicts embodied in his characters. His depiction of social life in Russia--prior to, during and after Napoleon's march



Martin D.

across Europe, including the heroics of princes and peasants, commanders and soldiers, the vacillations of the intellectuals and the rigidity of the aristocracy--all ring true. He deals with power-relations which will determine the outcome of the lives of the whole population of Europe. Gray shows an entirely different "us and them". Lanark, without abiding faith, wracked with doubt and disease, squares off with the self-assured brokers of power who appear to have all the qualities traditionally associated with "the good guys" except the morality, except any kind of honor. And what makes this depiction powerful is that it feels the way people like Lanark/Thaw feel. I feel that way; sometimes cursed by my own convictions, my own ideals to the point where I almost wish I could be like "them" and be "successful" and free of conscience once and for all.

Whereas Tolstoy speaks with confidence in science and admiration for technological achievements (even in war-making machinery,) Gray's tone is fearful respect for a power seemingly beyond comprehension. The former approaches history boldly, perceiving it as a great, careening, magnificent march forward. The latter does not suggest "forward" except in the life-span of one person and plays with fantastic time jumps and "intercalendrical zones" where possibilities of Einsteinian relativity jumble chronological events.

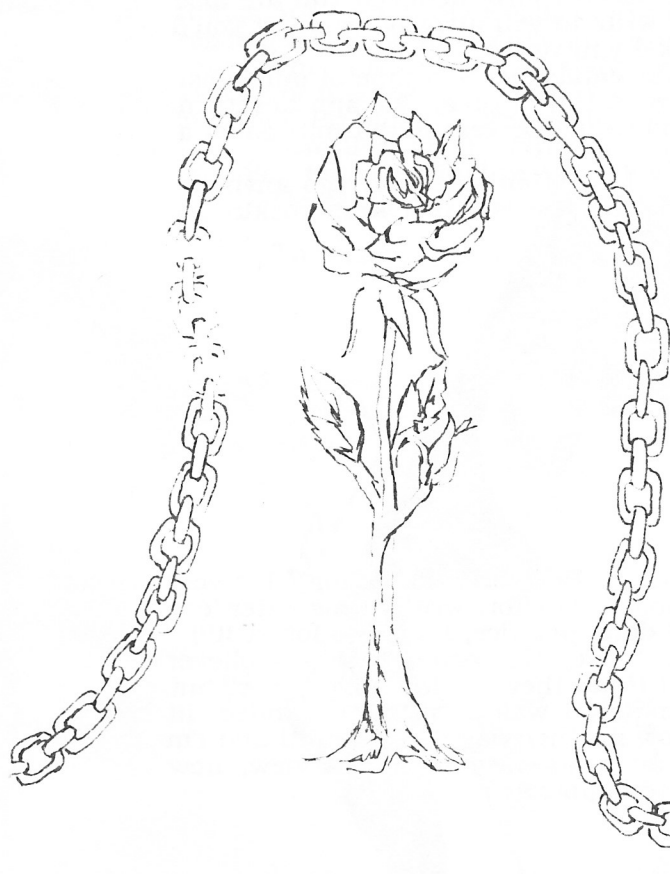
Is Tolstoy, then, a hopeless romantic and Gray a cynical, despairing post-modern? Absolutely no on both counts. Maybe this should be obvious, but Gray's perspective is actually broader than Tolstoy's for two objective reasons: a hundred years have elapsed during which we've learned more about our history and how much farther back it goes than was known in 1869

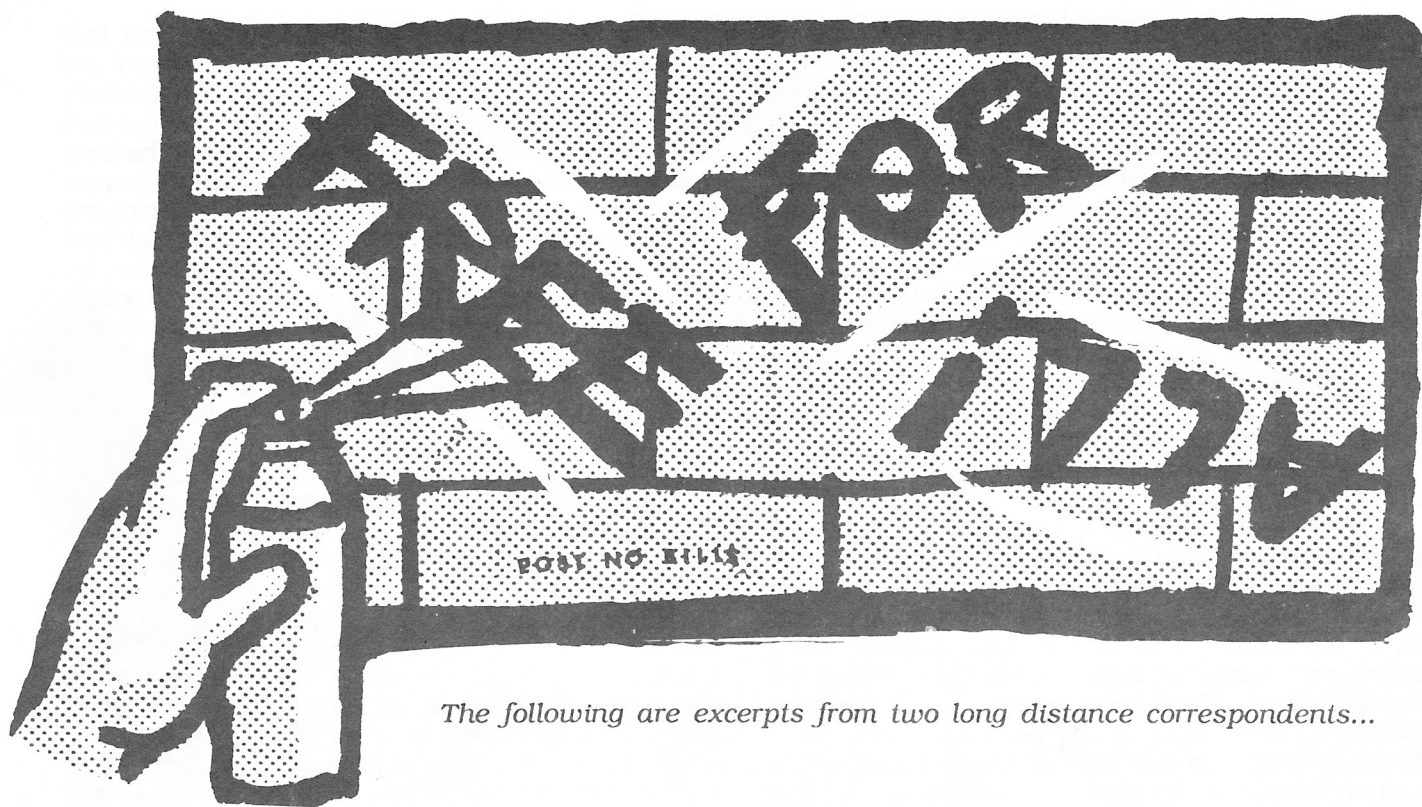
(when **War and Peace** was published,) and that many more cultures and courses of development are part of it. Furthermore, Tolstoy's view is essentially Christian while Gray's is struggling to come to grips with that legacy and attempting to see beyond it. (There's a great sequence in *Lanark* where Thaw futilely attempts to complete a mural, a la Michaelangelo, depicting the Christian creation myth--only the church in which he's doing it is doomed to destruction and, of course, he can never quite get it right!) It must be noted, though, that Tolstoy was a radical and sharp social criticism permeates **War and Peace**. Its realism includes denunciation of the status quo (particularly feudal Russia) and the enunciation of, what was at that time, a modern current of thought. Indeed, much of what is contained in the conclusion of **War and Peace** is as relevant today as it ever was, not because the world is unchanged but because the struggle over certain basic social questions continues unabated.

Marriage, for example, is a major theme of **War and Peace**. Tolstoy celebrates the love and struggle that form the enduring bonds between several of his main characters. He is not promoting it as an institution, rather he is describing what is for most people--the central social relationship in life, what we seek in it and the joy and mystery that gives it such power. Lanark/Thaw, on the other hand, experiences the necessity for sex/love without ever knowing why. A relationship develops that is a requirement for Lanark's escape from the Institute (a warped garden of eden?); he must have a mate with whom he can leave. He finds her and joy and commitment but the resolution of their travails together is far from monogamous marriage. They produce a child and this procreative function is both demystified and made more significant at the same time. (The role of paternal love is key throughout the book.) What empowers love and marriage? What is the essence of these relationships in crumbling times? What are the constants; permanence within total upheaval?

Ultimately, these two books are vastly different in style, story and, subsequent readers may say, stature. But, their authors are inspired makers of beauty and speakers of truth and they call attention to this vital point: history is not a collection of facts and journalistic reporting of events jammed into a data base. History is the tale of a community passed down through the generations by the artists/spokespersons who are called upon to tell it. The lessons and the wonder of shared experience and shared adventure are what define that community and give it identity. Both books aspire to speak to the community of humanity but are aware that that does not yet exist. Both draw our attention to the necessity of the individual to the renewal of life. Both urge us to continue.

Mat Callahan





The following are excerpts from two long distance correspondents...

Dear Mat/KI,

Thanks ever so much for the letter and for getting in touch. I play (sing) in the band Political Asylum, and we did some gigs in the States this summer, including 3 in and around (and for) the Anarchist Gathering in San Francisco. One of which was in a warehouse, would that have been your place? Anyways, when we were there, I picked up copies of Komotion (the magazine), and taped from a friend in SF a copy of the compilation Lp (I don't possess a record player I'm afraid.) Personally, I think the comp Lp is wonderful, not least the Looters, which I have deduced you are also involved with... I was attempting to find time to write to you anyway, to see if you'd like the magazine distributed over here, so I'm glad you wrote.

...Enclosed for you (as well as the latest AK catalogue) is a tape of our latest Lp, *window on the world*, which should be out around April time. We aim to return to your fair land at some point in the future, and would be very much into doing a benefit for Komotion the next time we are in SF...

OK, I guess that's about it for now really. I won't enlarge your ego anymore with telling you how wonderful the whole Komotion setup is... just keep rockin (as they say). Hope things are going well, take care.
Love

Ramsey Kanaan
AK Distribution/Political Asylum
Stirling, Scotland

Dear KI,

Thanks for your letter and for the magazine. Both are interesting. I'm very happy to hear about you and Komotion! (I'm doing a big effort writing this letter 'cos lately I don't write letters in English and when I don't practice, I start to forget it!!)

Here in Lima (capital of Peru), where I live, the people are unbeliever (incredulous) to alternative events, ideas... But I think they are learning slowly, but learning. That is the important, right? Fortunately I was born "open-minded" (it seems a label or a thing like that but I don't know another way to explain it) and I'm always looking new experiences, new things for read, new points of view, new feelings different than the common things all days happens...

Well, I don't know, cooperatives, collectives... like Komotion, here in Lima, maybe for the 2000 year!! I'm not happy with that, some friends and I was working for organize some experimental alternative events but as always is really impossible work with people who have nothing in their minds or economic interests. To release a fanzine is impossible 'cos nobody likes to buy them if they don't find what they want: sex, music, music reviews, music pics and words that they use or know. People into poetry, experimental or alternative music (not the common metal-punk-commercial fashion)... are difficult to contact. I know about a little group of theater, some intellectuals, and some bands of folk music (folklore from Peru, do you know it?) But they don't understand the idea of union and each one work alone but not only that, they talk shit about the other and viceversa... always thinking to have *the reason*. As I said before, I'm not happy with this situation. Anyway if someday some people want to do something in the alternative way, I think I will like to support them if it have nothing in relation with money (economic interests,) politic propaganda, commercial stuff... you know!! In this way I lose my time!

Well, about me, the Sundays, in the morning, I visit a hospital of childrens, I love childrens. I prefer (sincerely) to work with childrens, boys... than to work with "mens." In the hospital I help to eat to the childrens who can not do it alone, I play with them, I teach them to paint, to draw... to open a little their minds, it is really excellent work with them, I'm trying to work with them more days. That word "work" sound like "work for money" but not, the payment I receive is their happy face! But I have many, many ideas for work with them, they are poor childrens, some of them without parents, and there are more hospitals to visit and to help... Wow! Do this is what I call "to be live" (I hope you understand what I want to say)

Oh please, don't ask me about Vargas Llosa and their party, I don't have mind to think about him, all the days I hear something about him and about "Fredemo" (his party), that man is doing all the possible and promising the impossible for be president, spending a lot of money and talking shit about ALL, the people is believing him and support them... I think you know very well that game of the politics, the Right vs. the Left...

About cocaine and Sendero Luminoso (almost the same thing) is a shit, I think I can't tell you how I think about that in this letter by my poor English.. and also I don't know much about Sendero Luminoso (terrorists) but I think that if I talk about them I have to know a lot about them, right? And maybe what I think about them is wrong.... What I know about them, or what I do against them or against the government is nothing and I'm losing my time, only it, I think terrorism will exist forever... I don't want to be a toy of this system.

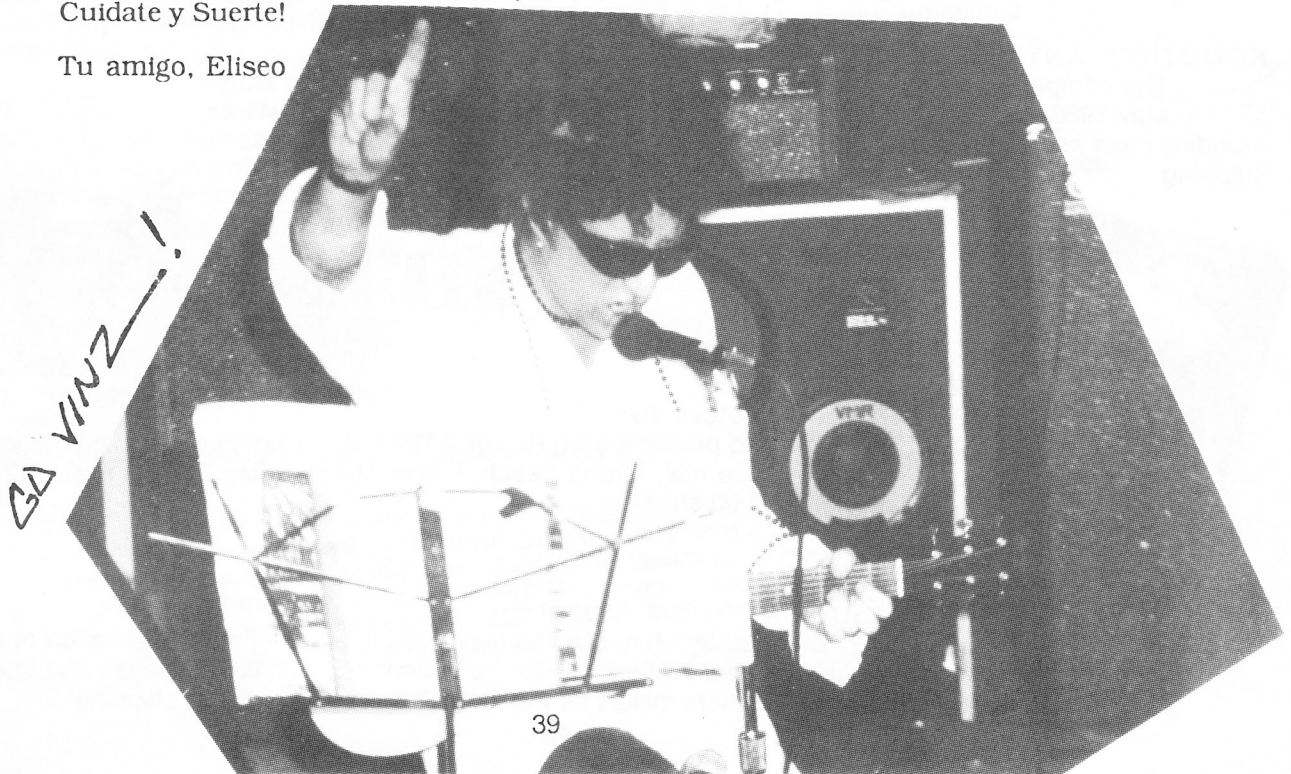
...You told me you know numerous spanish-speaking people there, please contact me with some girl interested to mail with me, ok. I want to tell you tons of things but I can't, my English is poor and I don't have time to study it, nowadays I'm reading books of philosophy and psychology...

I'm finishing of translate Komotion #3, that article of Robin Banks, "Think Twice" is interesting! And also the article about the news, that called "Cracked Mirror of Prejudice"... Thanks!!

...Well a big greeting to all the people involved to Komotion, to all your friends... take care and write back when you can.

Cuidate y Suerte!

Tu amigo, Eliseo



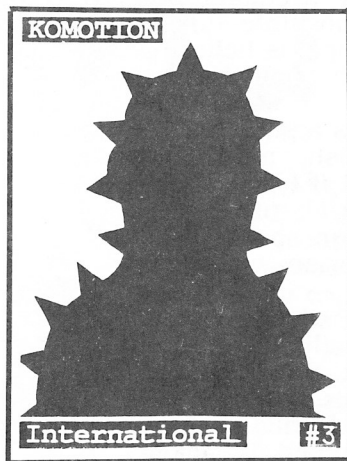
KOMOTION KATALOG

KOMOTION INTERNATIONAL (the album)

A collection of music and spoken word performances from some of the SF Bay Area's best! Diverse and provocative work by Alejandro Murguia, World Entertainment War, Po Go Bo, Penelope Houston, Peter Plate, Ogie Yocha, Snakewalk, Yeastie Girlz, Sister Double Happiness, Don Bajema, Beatnigs and Looters. \$7.00 LP or Cassette + \$2.00 shipping

KOMOTION Issue #3

Disinformation in the Information Age: topics include manipulation of public opinion through film and photography, the Genome Project (to completely identify human DNA,) plus the French Revolution--200 years later, poetry, stories, artwork by Richard Olsen and others, and the ever popular "Newz and Reviewz." \$2 + \$1 shipping

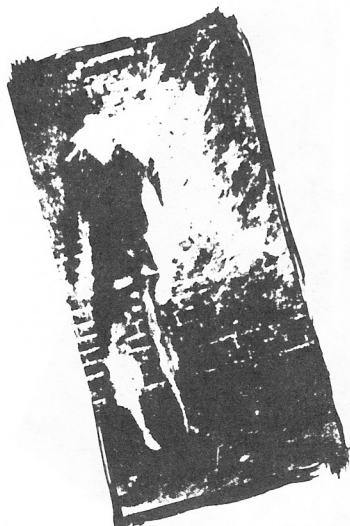


KOMOTION Issue #2

Number 1 is sold out. A few number 2's are still available. Articles on the theme of culture and commerce, "fine art" and funk, "Hip" Pop and Power as well as poetry, record reviews and much, much more. \$2.00 + \$1.00 shipping

KOMOTION ANTHOLOGY

The complete set of newsletters (the precursor of this magazine) from March 1987 to May 1988. Also featuring art by Celeste Connor, Winston Smith and Tim Wicks, including color xerox. This book is 90 pgs., printed in a limited edition. \$10.00 + \$2.00 shipping



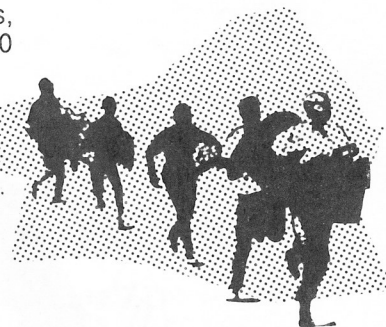
SIDES

SIDES - Looters EP

Limited pressing from Raizer X Records including title cut in both short form and extended dance mix, Wrong Beach, Follow Me and Flag For Sunrise. \$7.00 record or cassette + \$2.00 shipping

FLASHPOINT - The Video!

Directed by Mary Liz Thomson, this is a full-length visualization of the world at flashpoint with the Looters' LP as the soundtrack. Colliding images and interviews with the band and others makes for must viewing. \$15.00 + \$2.00 shipping





YOUR SILENCE WILL NOT PROTECT YOU

90 minutes of innovative work by Black and North American Indian poets and performers -- the Beatnigs, Benjamin Zepenia, Jeannette Armstrong, Lee Maracle, Chuck D, Kateri Damm, Celeste Connor, Macka B, and many others. \$7.00 Cassette + \$2.00 shipping

FROM THE GALLERY

Should anyone wish to purchase any of the art shown at Komotion contact us and we'll put you in touch with the artist or artists.

KOMOTION MEMBER INFO

KOMOTION

Komotion is an artist's collective, an alternative, an experiment... Run by all-volunteer labor, we try to create an environment that inspires and informs. Besides being the home of some forty musicians who rehearse and record here, our evening events are adventurous and bring forward special talent. We have presented music of all kinds, as well as poetry, performance art, films, video, dance, an art gallery, and hosted many benefits. A core of writers works on our often controversial magazine, which provides a forum for debate around cultural and political issues. (We have also released a compilation album, *Komotion International*.)

MEMBERSHIP

Komotion has a current membership of about 300 locally and another 100 or so internationally. At this point our events are not "membership only," but becoming a member is an expression of support for a center of this kind. And on our tenuous budget, WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT to continue. Becoming a member means contributing money or something needed for the club's operation.

\$10 Membership - includes a subscription to the Komotion Magazine and monthly events schedules that are mailed to you. And your Komotion card gets you a discount to all shows (except some benefits.) This is good for a year.

\$50 Membership - includes the above plus FREE admission to all events for a year. Primarily it is for people who want to (and are able to) more fully support our efforts, a "sustaining" members.

\$10 Magazine Subscription - outside the U.S. Please mail \$ in U.S. funds or international money order.

HOW WE OPERATE

Komotion doesn't pay the performers, except to cover their expenses. The door charge, drinks, etc. are so low that we can only cover the rent and basic expenses out of the parties. Even without money, however, many new acts and established artists have chosen to perform here.

The actual scheduling, editing of the magazine, etc. is done by committee in a kind of anarchistic fashion. We find things to be livelier with as few rules and policies as possible.

For more info, talk to us or write to us at:

KOMOTION INTERNATIONAL
P.O. Box 410502
San Francisco, CA 94141-0502

(Checks for membership can be mailed to "Komotion" at the above address.)

HELP WANTED

Komotion International seeks mag. people. **Any** and **all** skills required, including **editors, artists, paste-up and distribution.** Also **submissions.** **NO pay, LONG hours (occasionally) and NO opportunity for advancement!!** However, we guarantee **personal fulfillment, international recognition and FREE BEER!** Write to Komotion at the P.O. Box indicated.



BEST FISHES, COMRADE!

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\$ 2